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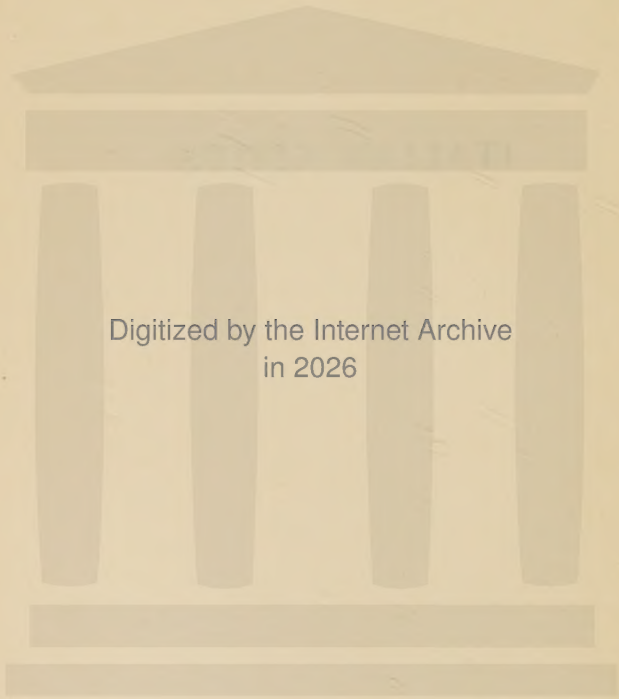

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# ITALIAN CITIES

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EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD

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# Part I

# RAVENNA

# RAVENNA

## I

THE traveller who to-day goes from Rome to Florence by rail, through the noble mountains of Tuscany and Umbria, bridges in a seven hours' journey a gap of ten centuries in the history of art. He leaves behind him the temples and arches, the Vatican's marble population of half-nude gods and heroes; he comes to mediæval towers, to saints and virgins, and the frescoed folk of the fourteenth century swathed in their heavy garments. The abrupt transition bewilders him; the sudden change in his artistic surroundings is almost inexplicable. How did it come to pass? The gods and athletes did not all die at once, nor the saints spring fully armed with attribute and symbol from the brain of Giotto; surely there was some intermediate period of anticipation and recollection when these incongruous elements were slowly fused together, and when some dim projection of the mediæval saint stood side by side with a fast-fading memory of the antique demi-god.

To find the vanished centuries that wrought this transformation one must ride northeast for seven hours more to the Adriatic marshes. Fourteen hundred years ago, when Italy flamed behind the horsemen of Alaric, the Emperor Honorius fled to the strongest city in the land, Ravenna, and with his corrupt and motley court went one noble fugitive, the genius of the Arts, who illustrates for all time the name of her asylum.

In those days Ravenna was still a port; but the sea, which made her greatness, has by receding destroyed her political importance, thus leaving her to hold the more surely, in her slow decay, the buildings of a time which she alone among cities fully represents, a time when pictorial Christian art had just emerged from her prenatal condition of the catacombs into the light of imperial favor, and the architecture of the Roman was beginning to be that of the Christian. Thus Ravenna became the splendid reliquary which preserved the dry bones of antique art to be quickened by the breath of the Renaissance. A unique link in the chain, she is the anomaly of Italian towns, — a city of antitheses; of pure water in the midst of poisonous marshes, of impregnable refuge among treacherous morasses.

Saved and lifted to high fortune by her submerged territory, when all Italy elsewhere sunk under the waves of barbarian invasion; guarded, not besieged

by the pestilence which walked without her walls, she is antithetical even in superficial appearance, and until our own times. Without are mean streets and rough façades; within, color and splendor; advanced radicalism to-day has usurped the stronghold of Greek hierarchy; upon her friezes are the gaunt and wasted faces of the Byzantine women, and in her thoroughfares are the most beautiful of Italian girls.

Ravenna is the end of the old, the beginning of the new. "Toward Rome all ancient history tends, from Rome all modern history springs;" but here for a brief moment the broad current of history was dammed up into this little space, then ebbing away even as the Adriatic has done, it left Ravenna full of strange, stranded monuments of a time that has elsewhere been swept out upon the tide into the ocean of oblivion.

Among the graves of the buried past, the sarcophagi of exarchs, captains, and priests, which lie scattered in the churches and the streets, — waifs from the shipwreck of Italy when Alaric burst upon her, — are the sepulchres and effigies of three rulers who epitomize the art-history of the city: of Galla Placidia, the conquered Roman princess, who subjugated in her turn and married her captor, and preserved to Ravenna what remained of old-time splendor; of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, who infused the vigor of the north into worn-out forms; of Justinian the

Emperor, who dowered the city with the art heritage of the Greek. The mausoleum of Placidia and the Baptistery represent the first of the three groups into which the buildings of the city fall; those remains of the Theodosian epoch being followed by the works of the Ostrogothic period, San Apollinare Nuovo and the tomb of Theodoric, while the last group, that of Justinian, boasts San Vitale and "Saint Apollinaris in the Fleet." The little mausoleum of Placidia may claim a first visit. There, for eleven hundred years, her body sat upright in jewelled cerements in her sarcophagus, and was the very type of her city's mission. For in Ravenna antique art grew rigid, swathed away in the embalming-cloths of conventionality, gilded and stiffened, mummied within the stone walls till, eight centuries having rolled by, the spirit of antiquity arose again and the chrysalis was forgotten, even as Galla's actual body crumbled in fire and ashes at a moment when the Renaissance had attained its full strength. Eleven centuries Galla sat in state, diademed and jewelled, in the darkness, but in 1577 some children, peering through an aperture in her sarcophagus, wishing to see better, thrust in a lighted brand, and she was burned, — robes, cypress-wood chair, and all, — a strangely grotesque ending of this grim memorial; for, with all its beauty, her little church stands as a monument to three invasions, and to the beginning of

such slaughter, misery, and depopulation as the world has not seen before or since. The little church is under the invocation of Saints Nazarius and Celsus, is only forty-six feet long by forty broad, and upon the outside might be taken for some house in which the workmen were wont to lay away their tools at night. Inside it is as if one had crept into the heart of a sapphire. Blue, the blue that glistens jewel-like on the peacock's neck, is the prevailing color, with great gold disks and drinking stags and dull red borderings. Here one may put on the robe of a catechumen and be of a church, which, tiny as is the building, stands erect at its full height, omnipotent over conquerors and conquered, among pagans to be dispersed and barbarians to be converted.

Upon its vaults and friezes, as upon the leaves of a missal, Christianity has written in jewelled letters for all men to read, and in the midst of a tottering world this new handwriting on the wall appeared to the Belshazzar of the Roman decadence. To read it aright to-day, some of the historical conditions of the time must be studied. These mosaic pictures expressed the momentous changes of their age, and a new art was announced in their forms and colors.

The earlier Cæsars and the founders of the Church had alike been in their graves for nearly four centuries, but the Roman empire had decayed

and fallen, while the persecuted Church of Christ had arisen, though with a strangely altered spirit, to a mighty stature. Of the epoch which, reaching from about 400 A.D. to 565, includes the buildings of Galla, Theodoric, and Justinian, Byzantium was the real theatre, Ravenna only an echo, but an echo which has come to us clear and distinct, while the voice of the parent city has been almost lost in the tumult of the crusades and of the Turkish conquest. The age was one of disintegration, yet one in which particles were beginning to crystallize into new and lasting shapes. The blood of the empire, poisoned by luxury and tyranny, was drained by the sword of the sectary within, of the barbarian without. Theologians massacred one another for the difference of a letter in the alphabet; the factions of the chariot races slew one another in the hippodrome and divided the whole city into two camps, while the Goth waited upon the frontier to destroy the survivors. Thousands of men, smitten with a strange madness, left family and country and fled to the desert to starve and pray and see visions, far from all human ties and duties.

It was an age of saints and schoolmen, of petty emperors and great generals; Ravenna, and Ravenna alone, has preserved it for us in the traces of that strange civilization of Constantinople which lingered on for a thousand years till the sword of the Moslem

gave the death-blow to what had been so long in dying. Rome was no more, and with the founding of Constantinople a new order of things began. The city which rose upon the Bosphorus inherited the vices but not the virtues of paganism; the military spirit, the religious toleration, the perfect administration, of antique Rome disappeared. Outside, the barbarian was more frequently bribed than driven from the frontier, alternately betrayed and defended by venal generals. The city, unmindful of its danger, abandoned itself to its passions for brawling and chattering. The strife of the rival chariot factions, the greens and the blues, filled the streets with bloody tumult and shook the throne itself. Only second in popular interest were the religious dissensions; and all classes, from the Emperor to the fisherman, joined in these struggles. The subtile Greek intellect, ever given to word-spinning, seized upon the dogmas of the new faith, tore them to shreds, pieced them together again, broidered them over with new devices, and, like Penelope of old, spent days and nights in weaving and ravelling the tangled web of theology. The Sophists rose to life again in the heresiarchs and churchmen, and there came no new Socrates to silence them. Disputation grew deadly. What had been mere difference of opinion with those who were but *seekers* after truth became matter of life and

death with those who arrogantly claimed to have *found* the truth.

The annals of the time are filled with these fierce outbursts of sectarian hatred; mad riots; œcumenical councils packed with armed ruffians and savage Nitrian monks, where, after the inevitable violence and bloodshed, a heavy bribe to the Emperor's cook or chief eunuch settled the doctrinal point at issue. For the Emperor was grand inquisitor in matters of faith, the Empress not inactive; and more than once, to quote the words of Cyril, "the holy Virgin of the court of heaven found an advocate in the holy Virgin of the court of Constantinople."

The citizen who had left far behind him the days of the palæstra and the academy, now decked in curiously embroidered garments and loaded with jewels, passed his time in the circus, an eager partisan of the greens or blues; tarred on his favorite bishop in the hotter strife of the synod; applauded some popular preacher in the churches, or, stripped of his adornments, walked barefoot in penitential procession.

The schools of philosophy were closed, and human reason, lulled to sleep by formulæ, dreamed fitfully or muttered incoherently in nightmare creed quarrels. The Church was the great career open to ambition, and as human energy rushed impetuously into the new channel, the artists were now enlisted in its service.

Through its first centuries of faith and charity Christian dogma was so simple, its ideal so constantly present in men's minds, that no palpable image was needed to explain the one or recall the other, but in the later days of dogmatic definition, when the churchmen were tying up their faith in orthodox packets, the artists were required to label them with all the quaint figures of ecclesiastical heraldry. "Pictures are the books of the ignorant," said Saint Augustine, and to teach the ignorant the Church used them, clothing the teaching, as did her founder, in the garb of symbolism, — a language that could be understood by the barbarian and the slave. But in what material should these eternal truths be expressed? Painting and sculpture were pagan and aristocratic, governed entirely by antique tradition; devils inhabited the statues of heathen gods, and before the image of the Emperor many a Christian had gone to martyrdom. There remained a minor art unpolluted by heathen worship, used for merely decorative purposes to ornament a fountain, line a niche, or enliven a pavement. This could be safely employed without evoking comparisons in the minds of the less devout or more artistic worshippers. Just as a converted heathen slave might rise from one church dignity to another until he ascended the bishop's throne, so mosaic, at first a cheerful house-

hold decoration, when Christianized became solemn, hieratic, exchanged its dress of simple colors for a gorgeous robe of purple and gold, climbed to church wall and dome, and there set forth the mysteries of the faith and the glories of heaven. Yet this new art was pagan in form and feeling; as the fathers of the Church imitated the language of Plato or Seneca, so the Christian artist borrowed the imagery of paganism for the service of his faith. It was the spirit of antiquity that animated him; its serenity, its cheerful acceptance of inevitable law, its keen sense of the beauty of life, were strong within him as he carved the sarcophagus or decorated the apse.

There were no images of suffering or punishment, no crucifixion, no last judgment, not even a martyrdom, though the young Church was still ruddy from her baptism of blood. When later the art that had its humble origin in the night of the catacombs flourished in an imperial city on the walls of mighty basilicas, its spirit was unchanged. The conversion of Rome had left it unconverted. Greek example, Greek moderation, still guided the artist's hand, for the true artist is ever half a pagan. So, fraught with a new meaning, the imagery of paganism found ready welcome within the Church. Here we still see the vintage trodden out by loves, only now it is the vintage of the Lord; the winged funeral

genii become guardian angels of the Christian's tomb; the crown of the Emperor, the reward of the blessed; the palm of the victorious athlete, the martyr's emblem. The goddesses yield their attributes: the dove becomes the visible sign of the Holy Spirit; Juno's peacock the symbol of immortality; Diana's stag the hart of the Psalmist; and as in these same mosaics the Magi bring gifts to the Mother of God, so each dethroned goddess pays tribute to the new Queen of Heaven. Diana's crescent, Minerva's serpent, lie beneath her feet; Cybele gives the chair of state; Circe the aureole; Juno the matron's veil and crown; Flora her roses and lilies, and Isis places the divine Child in Mary's arms. Here even are the heroes of Greek myth, chosen for some likeness to the founder of Christianity: Mercury leading the spirits of the departed; Orpheus, who descended into hell to save a soul, and who draws all men to him by the power of music; Hercules, who came into the world to punish the wicked, to deliver the oppressed, to do the tasks and bear the burdens of others. In this Christianized Pantheon there are no new images; Egypt and Phœnicia contributed the fish, the cross, the ship struggling through the waves, and the lamb. The Good Shepherd — loveliest figure of all — was a precious heritage from Greece.

## II

Mosaic had borrowed its motives from the declining art of sculpture. The marbles which fill the Ravennese streets and churches will reveal the extent of these obligations. The sarcophagi and capitals, some of them roughly and coarsely executed, others of a relatively high degree of artistic excellence, show the same subjects treated with the same decorative feeling that we have seen on wall and dome. But these Christian monuments, with their doves and peacocks and stags, enlaced in a tangle of vine and acanthus leaves, are the valedictorians of a dying art. In looking at them we feel that the race of sculpture has run its course. As the long line of Florentine sculptors ended in a clever goldsmith, so antique sculpture degenerated into the carving of mere decorative motives, and with notable exceptions, like the ivory throne of Archbishop Maximian, it is clumsy carving. To no other art had the new faith proved as fatal, and the decline of sculpture is synchronous with the rise of Christianity.

For sculpture is essentially a Pagan art: its true province is the nude human body; its aim is the

exposition of corporal strength and beauty. In ancient Greece, where the national manners and customs, ethics and ideals, favored its development, it reached its meridian of glory. In the service of religion it transformed the athlete into a god, the fair woman into a goddess. It may be truly said of the Greek sculptor that he had drawn the gods down to earth and raised mortals to heaven. Consequently sculpture was the consummate expression in art of the genius of a nation which worshipped physical perfection as the gift of the immortals, which honored the gods by athletic games and choral dances, and whose deities wore the flesh and shared the nature of men. The concrete result of this spirit, of this glorification of the flesh, this keen æsthetic sense, this cultivation of the body, is Greek sculpture. The Roman conquerors accepted the traditions and shared the feelings of the vanquished Greeks. The young mother still prayed in the temple of Venus that her child might be fair. The youth still wrestled and ran in the gymnasia. Nudity was holy. "*Deus nudus est*," wrote Seneca, and Roman flattery could find no greater tribute to pay the Emperor than to carve his statue naked "like a god."

The empire grew old and weak; and when the time was ripe came the conversion of Rome and the triumph of Christianity, — a triumph that was fatal

to antique sculpture. A new spirit unknown before had come into the world, a spirit of active benevolence and self-sacrifice, of active destruction and persecution. The Pagan victors had left their gods to the conquered; they themselves frequently honored and adopted them; religious intolerance was unknown to the Empire, and Rome was the Pantheon of the world. But to the Christian who literally interpreted the words "he who is not with me is against me," the Pagan temples and statues were an offence and an abomination. He unhesitatingly accepted the miracles which the superstitious Pagans asserted had been wrought by their sacred images; he believed the prophecies of the oracles, but he never doubted that they were the work of devils seeking to delude mankind, and that the duty of every true Christian was to destroy them. And as a doctrine of demolition is generally acceptable to the popular mind, the work was done only too well.

When it is remembered that the young Church was largely recruited from the lowest classes of society, the disinherited of the earth, it will be easily understood how no æsthetic scruple, no consideration for art, could prevent the wholesale destruction of the sacred images.

A day of wrath had come upon the gods and those who loved and worshipped them. Fierce Nitrian monks from the desert, fired with fanatical zeal,

pleasure-loving empresses in expiation of a sin or two, orthodox prelates, headed the crusade against them. Rude hands tore them from their desecrated shrines; axe and club shattered their round limbs and marred the calm faces. The bronze was cast into the furnace; the gold and ivory disappeared; the marble was thrown into the lime-kiln or rolled into the ditch. The rustic gods of vineyard, field, and garden; the chaplet-adorned Termini; the marble nymphs which protected wells and fountains; the penates that sanctified the hearth, — were ruthlessly destroyed. The holy things which for centuries had lent grace and joy to the peasants' daily toil; the grottoes hung with votive faun-skins and shepherds' pipes; the wayside shrines and sacred stones garlanded with field flowers and shining with libations, which had been sacred to generations of men and were the very soul of the land, — were broken and defiled.

Long before the work of destruction was completed, the Christian sculptor had begun to carve on the sarcophagi of the believer the images of the heathen; for like the paintings and the mosaics, this sculpture was Pagan in feeling as well as in form. Its symbols were but antique motives clumsily imitated by unskilled artists working for poor patrons. A stone-mason of the age of the Antonines would be ashamed of such bungling work. The reverence

which we feel before the martyr's tomb should not blind us to the fact that plastically this sculpture is of little value. From the first it was of an inferior character to contemporary Pagan work. Much of it is almost ludicrous in its clumsiness, its lack of technical knowledge, its poverty of invention. Most of the figures look as though they had been made by the hand of a child; so lumpish and squat are they that many of them are only four heads high. The lions in the representations of the miracle of Daniel look like puppies, and though the draped figures still preserve a certain dignity, the nude has already become grotesque, as in the façades of early churches. There are, of course, occasional exceptions, and the sarcophagi of Ravenna show us Christian sculpture at its best, notably in the altar-front of San Francesco, with its beardless, Phœbus-like Christ and the noble figures of the Apostles. The unruffled serenity of the antique spirit shows itself, however, in these rude carvings as well as in the mosaics. The mansuetude and self-restraint of the sculptor is also in direct opposition to the persecuting spirit of the Fathers of the Church, who delighted to elaborate descriptions of the torments of hell and the horrors of the judgment day, and who, believing in the guilt of error, unhesitatingly condemned both the virtuous and wicked Pagan alike to an eternity of torture.

These sculptures are invaluable to the student of

church history. In no other way is the difference between the popular conceptions of Christian teaching and the dogmas of the theologians so clearly manifested as by a comparison between the tone of the patristic writings and the spirit of contemporary art. Uninfluenced by the gloomy doctrines of Augustine and the grim asceticism of Jerome, the artists invariably chose for representation the tender and benignant aspects of their creed, which still appeal to the heart with resistless force. The beautiful story of the birth in the manger; the miracles of mercy; the Ascension; the poetic figure of the Good Shepherd, were their favorite themes. While Tertullian was gloating over the future agonies of the heathen actor and describing the torments of the charioteer writhing in the flames of hell, what were the sculptors chiselling on the believer's last resting-place? Tragic and comic masks, antique symbols signifying that life is but a player's part, to be well acted for a brief season and resigned without regret; or they carved the race-horse bounding toward the goal, — a symbol of the course of human life. The most appealing figure of them all, the Good Shepherd, is no other than the Hermes Kriophoros who saved the city of Tanagra from the plague by carrying a ram around its walls, and in whose honor Kalamis the sculptor made the votive statue which served as a point of departure to the Tanagran pot-

ters. These clay figurines of a beautiful adolescent, with the staff and petasos, and the lamb upon his shoulder, were in their turn imitated by the Christian sculptor, who found in them a singularly felicitous presentation of the benign shepherd of the most tender and poetical of the Psalms. And, indeed, the merciful god who saved the doomed city was no unfit avatar of him who saved not the city only, who bore the burden of human wrong-doing, and was himself the sacrificial lamb. Sometimes the kid was placed upon his shoulder by the sculptor, who was more compassionate than the Fathers who wrote: "He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save."

This unconscious mitigation of the cruelty and bigotry of the theologians by the artists is very significant. Art is the visible expression of the ideals of the epoch in which it is produced, and the fact that Christian art did not reflect this aspect of Christian dogma proves not only that these beliefs were confined to the learned, but that the artist was still under the dominion of Pagan habits of thought. In the humbler believers the temperate joy of the antique world still lingered, and the deity of the young faith was he who leads the soul beside the still waters and who comforts her in the valley of the shadow of death, rather than he who shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

When the doctrines of predestination, original

sin, and eternal punishment finally permeated the masses of the people, the artist was quick to feel the change in the moral atmosphere. Images of suffering and death were multiplied; the Blessed Virgin's face was painted black, and the sculptor finally accepted the tradition of the deformity of Christ, an idea as repugnant to religious feeling as it is to the plastic instinct.

Thus we trace the same Hellenic influence shaping the moribund art of the sculptor and the nascent art of mosaic. We left the mosaic-worker translating the simple symbols of the stone-cutter into the new medium of artistic expression. Mind and hand were still under the tutelage of the Pagan; and when later historic scenes were introduced, the same antique spirit characterized them. The artist's childhood might have thrilled at his grandfather's tales of the blood and martyrdom of Diocletian's time; his eyes might have looked with pride at the marks of torture for the faith existent upon the limbs of some old house-servant, yet when he made his cartoon for the mosaic he put upon it Daniel among the lions, the sacrifice of Isaac, the children unharmed amid the flames, but no more intemperate or realistic allusion to the persecutions which filled the records of the Church.

Tradition was strong within him, and the artist of Ravenna had not lost its dignity and self-restraint.

Outside, the mad controversialists might riot, — Donatist ruffians clubbing to death in default of the steel their creed forbade them, with sticks and stones a-flying; but inside the arches of the Baptistery, at his quiet work, the artist instinctively resisted the bigotry and intolerance of his epoch. Only one ominous figure in the tomb of Placidia shows the schisms that were dividing the Church, — the figure of the Saviour burning the heretical books. By an unconscious irony it is placed directly opposite the benignant image of the Good Shepherd; and the two conflicting aspects of Christianity — its bitter intolerance and its loving charity — confront each other in this narrow space. The sun of Greek art was setting, but it still shone upon Ravenna. The mosaicist of San Apollinare saw about him in the streets the stiff-robed Byzantines; but he had seen, too, the pagan temples with their friezes and tympana and their figures clad in simple sweeping draperies, so that his long procession of virgins and martyrs moved in measured harmonies like the epheboi and canephoræ of the Parthenon. The grand white-robed angels, the brown-locked, beardless Christ of the apse, were calm and stately; line and mass were still noble; beauty had passed away, but antique dignity had survived the sack of Rome, and in a fallen Greece the memory of the Zeus at Olympia had not yet quite faded.

But it was only a tradition, not a living reality. Tradition taught the artist a certain grandeur of composition, a conventional position of head and hands, a good treatment of the general lines of the drapery, but it could do no more for him. There was no body under the drapery, no muscles to move the head or raise the hands. The face was a weakened copy of the antique type, the cranium shrunken and elongated; the great hollow eyes and pinched lips had no life in them; they could not move. What Medusa of decadence had stricken these people to stone? What had so changed the type, so utterly transformed the ideal of the artist? Where were the athletes, the gods, the goddesses he loved so well, and how came these hollow-eyed wraiths in their place? Was it incapacity of the artist or degeneracy of the models? It was both, as the history and conditions of Byzantium show us.

The Greek of Pericles's day, when he carved a god or an athlete, went to the gymnasium or palæstra and found his model in the youths who flashed by in the foot-race; watched the evenly developed muscles strain and rise and fall in the tug of the wrestling bout; talked with the panting ephebos as he scraped the dusty oil from the limbs that were to be translated into marble.

He found the long folds of his draperies in the sweep of the procession, his faun or bacchante in

the rhythmical changes of the choragic dance, and his fellow-citizens were his best models; his work was patriotic, ethical; art was yet in the service of religion, a grateful service, for the gods of that religion were idealized and deified mortals. In superior strength and beauty was their godhood made manifest and these essential attributes could be expressed in marble. Thus to the Greek the statue of his god was at once ethical and æsthetic. Ethical — for the Hermes of the palæstra spoke eloquently to the Greek youth: Exercise, be temperate, be patient, give your country a good soldier. Æsthetic — for the Greek had a love for the beauty of the human body unique in the history of art, and as beauty was to him the visible expression of the good, so a well-developed body was the highest form of beauty. Compare these conditions with those of Byzantium in the sixth century. Of the Byzantine artist was required something which cannot be expressed by form or color. A new religion had arisen, which, far from honoring the body, regarded it as an instrument of shame and degradation, its corporal instincts as temptations of the devil, its strength and beauty as a snare; the flesh was to be mortified by fasting and penance. To the fathers of the Church it was a sin to frequent the baths or throw the discus; better in unwashed sanctity to throw stones at heretic Arians. Greek

temperance, Roman self-control had yielded to the fanaticism which filled the desert with many a laura, emptying the camp and the gymnasium. The world was changed; the hardy legionary had become the gilded soldier of Honorius's palace or the undisciplined Gothic mercenary, servant to-day, master to-morrow; the calm athlete, with limbs bronzed in the healthful sun of the palæstra, was replaced by the macerated ascetic, blackened and burned in the scorching African desert, and the tranquil beauty of the Greek statue gave way to the self-torturing genuflections of Stylites upon his pillar. The body was to be reduced till it became a semi-transparent envelope for the soul, a slender bond to hold the aspiring spirit to earth, and the plastic arts soon felt the influence of this asceticism.

The artists were required to give tangible form to the new ideal. To this task they were inadequate; expression, dramatic movement, strong personality they could not achieve; they could only diminish and attenuate. The body had to be covered, and they soon forgot how the members of this covered body were put together.

Costume, too, had become stiff and formal. Instead of the clinging draperies of antiquity, that showed the muscles under their folds, the Byzantines loaded themselves with heavy robes of gold embroidery, or when they wore thin tissues covered

them with whole Bible stories in needlework that falsified all natural lines. The simple mantle shrank to a cape or scarf, clumsy and stiff with jewels, and the swathed body became a mere prop for a mass of brocade and gems.

Under such conditions the artists soon forgot the lessons of the past; each new figure was but a weakened copy of some forerunner's copy, and, as at Mount Athos or in modern Russia, art-work was taught by certain well-known and unchangeable formulæ. But while art became degraded in form it grew glorious in color. This color was the gift of the East to the western world; oriental subtlety filled the intellectual atmosphere, oriental color-feeling dominated the æsthetic sense, and the sun of Greek art, which rose white and clear in the East, set in the purple and crimson that live upon the walls of Ravenna.

## III

After visiting Galla's mausoleum, we follow the fortunes of those Goths who were the eastern brothers of Placidia's Ataulf, and go to San Apollinare. The basilica lifts its ugly front of blackened brick, flanked by a simple round tower, and giving no hint of its interior beauty. Within it is difficult to conceive of anything more delightful to the eye than its gold scroll-work upon blue, its dull red upon gold. There are in the world few richer decorations than the frieze of saints and virgins moving across the solemn color of the church. It is a three-aisled round-arched basilica, the friezes filling magnificently the place which developed into the triforium in later churches, while panels of mosaic cover the walls between the windows of the clerestory. "New St. Apollinaris," it is called. It was new nearly fourteen hundred years ago, and as it rose, course upon course, above the house-tops, it saw in the distance the masts of the galleys in the port of Classis, where later the bell-tower of the other church built to the same saint took their place.

When Theodoric, the heretic, raised this golden house for his Arian bishops, Martin, not Apollinaris, received the dedication, and in violet tunic still heads the procession of the saints. It was four hundred years later that fear of the Saracen caused the removal of the patron saint's bones from the Classis and gave a new name to the church. In the earlier times, when its flooring was being laid, the sound of the purple shoes of the Emperors of the West had hardly died away from the pavement of Ravenna, and after the Ostrogoths they were to come again on the feet of the exarchs of that Justinian and Theodora who still blaze upon the walls of San Vitale. A little later and the floor of the basilica heard a very different tread, and rang to the mailed heels of Charlemagne. Seizing both the shadow and the substance, the great Charles took the crown and the prestige at Rome, the columns and the bas-reliefs at Ravenna, as, guarded by Frankish soldiers, wain after wain laden with the spoils of Theodoric's palace, the white oxen of Emilia straining at the yoke, creaked away toward Ingelheim and Aix-la-Chapelle. Franks and even Lombards were, however, still in the future when the Greek workmen on their scaffolding above the capitals stood before the growing frieze, laboriously building with little cubes of gold and color this "Palatium" of Theodoric, this "Classis" with

its towers and ships, shaping the Magi and adding one virgin after another till the whole tale of twenty-two stood processional and complete, facing the saints and patriarchs of the other side. He was a real artist, this Greek, for he was of a real art epoch. When he worked upon the friezes, somewhere about the year 560, the founder of the church, Theodoric, had been long laid away under the giant monolith which covers his tomb, and his land had passed into the hand of the Byzantine Justinian, in whose city of Constantinople a true art-growth was stirring. There, in the new capital of the world, ideas as new as the city were springing up, and the nation was in that state of agitation and ferment at all times productive of great results for good or evil.

A double evolution was being accomplished. From the theological counter-currents, the ideas of bishops, — Greek, Latin, and African, — the evolution of dogma; from the art experience of East and West, — the arcades of Spalato and of Syria and the color-feeling of the oriental, — the evolution of a new architecture. The Greek had become master again in art. For five hundred years he had served the Roman, and now, in throwing away his livery of service, he threw away, too, all that false ornament which the Roman had borrowed from him and falsified in the borrowing. The Greek was master

once more, and he determined that his architectural ornament should be what it had always been in his time of freedom, structural. Not that he meant to raise temples and propylæa; he served a new god, and the new service had new needs, for which the vault of the Roman was admirably fitting. The arch, therefore, he kept, and made the ruling principle. But the heavy cornices, which once under a roof protected nothing from a rain which did not fall; the super-imposed orders, with their pediments and colonnettes, stuck unmeaningly upon structural masonry, — he rejected unhesitatingly, substituting surfaces with but slight projections, lightly though richly carved, where the columns were true weight-bearers, and there were no useless members. In color, too, he was an innovator.

The ancient Greek, simple in his taste and restricted by comparative poverty, used delicately painted stuccoes upon his buildings. The wealthy Roman, quarrying from the whole known world, replaced them with costly marbles, which he collected from the ends of the earth. The polished columns and incrusted slabs would admit of no less lustrous fellowship in decoration; by the side of their splendid depth of tone, stucco and painting in fresco looked poor and cheap. It was necessary to find a wall-covering equally rich and brilliant, in which the figures of saints, angels, and emperors,

and the compositions from Bible history could be represented. The chemistry of the earth had given the marbles, with their endless variety. The Greek set to work the chemistry of the laboratory. With antimony, copper, tin, etc., he made slabs of glass almost as various as the marbles; then cutting them into little cubes, he produced with them the richest artificial color in the world.

Our Greek artist had thus risen superior to the decadent citizens about him; perhaps he had stood in the crowd at the completion of St. Sophia, and had heard Justinian exclaim, "Solomon, I have outdone thee." Indeed, in that great church, with its wide reposeful curves and spaces, its cupola, its simple round arches springing directly from the capitals, its long rows of polished columns, he had given the typical example of an architecture which was to deeply influence the most solemn church interior in Italy, that of St. Mark's of Venice, and to impress the German feeling so strongly as to give its own name of Byzantine to many a Rhenish church for many a century to come. So it is not enough to accredit Justinian with his great code and pandects, or even with the exploits of those practically pious, smuggler-missionaries, the good old gentlemen who came journeying home from the far East with silk-worms packed in their walking-sticks. Besides the lawyer and manufacturer, we

recognize in him the art patron of the black-browed, close-curled artisan who stood upon the scaffold of this church, — the patron of him and of his many-sided brethren who busied themselves in the provision of art for all men, making costumes, Christian in their swathing of the body from head to foot, Greek in the transparency of their many-wrinkled tissue; making sculpture, which western monks borrowed long after they had become architects and builders for themselves; providing eight centuries of Madonnas painted by receipt till Giotto tore up the prescription and made one for himself. Ravenna's was an age of decadence, the end of the Roman empire; but it was also an age of beginnings of art propaganda, and the Greek artisan was the first of a series of proselytizers extending to Manuel Chrysoloras in the fifteenth century.

San Vitale, founded 526, consecrated in 547, and supposed to be a derivation from the golden Temple of Antioch, built by Constantine, is a typically Byzantine building and the antecedent of the church which Charlemagne raised at Aix-la-Chapelle. To the architect as builder it is interesting as the first western domed church, the dome raised by Greek workmen long after Italy had forgotten the cunning which curved the cupola of the Pantheon and vaulted the baths of Caracalla. To the architect as decorative artist, and to all men, it

is beautiful by reason of the wonderful mosaics which cover its choir from arch to pavement.

It is hard to say enough of their unique color, which is not silvery and gray, like that of modern schools of painting; not tender like the Umbrian, or warm and golden like that of the great Venetians, but deep, glowing, and solemn, like the tone of a bell or the thunder of an organ. There are the gold of Byzantium, the purple of Cæsar, the blues and greens of the chariot factions. The walls glisten with a sheen like that on a dove's neck, or the wings of a moth butterfly; with tawny red like the rind of a pomegranate; the blue of the Persian turquoise melting imperceptibly into green, and orange glowing into red or darkening into purple. Even the delicate columns, coiffed with strange capitals, are more like Indian ivory than marble. To call it all an Aladdin's cave would be to suggest the hard glitter of gems; this is rather a soft and solemn splendor. Still the place shines with gold, and may have suggested jewels to the imaginations of northern conquerors. The Norseman of Cæsar's Varangian Guard, as he looked into the royal mausoleum in the old times, when against the deep-toned mosaic Placidia's sarcophagus still glittered with its covering of silver plates, may well have thought that here indeed was the "dwarfs' work," here the "dragon's treasure," here the

gnomes' cavern of Scandinavian tradition, and the crusading minnesinger may have echoed in his song of the Venusberg his memories of the rich vaulting of St. Vitalius. In the discreet and skilful use of gold and in the toning of large masses, these early mosaics far surpass those of St. Mark's at Venice. Among the latter, many of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries make spots upon their vast gold backgrounds, while even the earlier ones lack the dignity of the examples at Ravenna. Gold predominates there also, but in smaller masses than at Venice; next comes dark blue; then a green, neither warm nor cold, graduated with a yellower green; a very beautiful creamy white; dull red and a fine purplish brown follow in lesser quantities.

The curious blunting of all angles by the little cubes, and the consequent lines of reflected light emphasizing the architecture, is a not altogether pleasing, but noticeable and essential effect in mosaic work. It is not too much to say that no decorative wall-covering can equal mosaic. In the first place, it is practically imperishable; Michelangelo affirmed that oil-painting was for women, and only fresco for men; but his master, Ghirlandajo, said well that mosaic was the true painting for eternity.

The frescoed people of Lippi and Gozzoli flake

and drop from the walls; the panels of the *cinquecento* crack, and the tempera breaks away; the canvases of Giorgione and Tintoretto blacken and moulder; but Justinian and Theodora, upon the choir of San Vitale, shine as brightly as if Belisarius were still afield and Varangers yet in harness guarding the palace of Constantinople.

If you go up into the galleries you will find the cubes not a whit less fresh than those you buy now at Murano. Again, this glass paste, opaque, semi-opaque, and transparent, is equalled in depth and richness by nothing except the finest stained glass. Lastly, in their bed of cement, made with powdered travertine and linseed oil, the little cubes cannot be laid so that their faces shall be upon a perfectly level plane; the result is the varied tonality produced by a thousand different degrees of reflection, giving an indescribable richness of surface; while the actual gradations are remarkable, masses which from below seem smooth spots of color proving to be exquisite modulations running through twenty or more shades of green, or blue, or brown. During our last visit to Ravenna we were fortunate enough to climb to the very dome of the Baptistery, where workmen were putting supporting-irons into loosened portions of the mosaic. Seen close at hand, these mosaics were remarkable in their freedom of treatment. The color was used almost as in a huge sketch painted with a

full brush, and was, in the flesh tones, suggestive of the best Pompeian fresco-work. In the great pictures of Theodora and Justinian at San Vitale, which we also examined on a scaffolding, and which are a century later, the handling is more *serré*, the colors deeper and more solemn, but less atmospheric.

The main body of San Vitale has been restored in the true spirit of seventeenth-century bungling, and the painted rose garlands of the dome, a proof of how far human beings can be unperceiving of the fitting, moulder away in the dampness from the water which now and then rises stealthily upon the flooring of the church, as if it would reflect in homage the columns which, with their anchor-carved capitals, are spoils from some antique temple of Neptune, — foul water, however, and befitting the stricken fortunes of the god. But the choir is splendid from top to pavement; not an inch is uncovered. With the instinct of true artists, who knew that in mosaic-work it was all or nothing, and that no ordinary pigment could stand beside it, they have clothed the whole in a glittering jewelled mail, flowing over every jut and angle, the soft color of which is yet an impenetrable armor, hard enough to utterly resist the tooth of time, which has so gnawed the other portions of the church. On either side of the high altar the reflected gold of the vestments and groundwork glows dully like smouldering embers; indeed, it is the final

smouldering of antique art from which a brand shall be snatched for the rekindling. But this glorious color ends by going to the head, like strong wine, and provoking all sorts of impossible analogies.

## IV

After such an orgy of visual pleasure, one longs for the blue of the sky and the green of the meadows. Outside Ravenna, dikes stretch their long brown lines between fat rice-fields where the descendants of Sidonius's frogs croak in Aristophanic chorus in the stagnant water. In spring these pestilential marshes are transformed into fields of fairylike blossoms. Nature, in emulous imitation of art, annually reproduces the color scheme of the Byzantines in the blue of the waters and in the tender green of the young blades of rice; while tamarisks, lilies, orchids, blossoming flags and rushes, suggest the more vivid hues of the mosaics. Every foot of this treacherous soil contains a buried treasure, flotsam and jetsam of the wreck of the antique world, but the dragon that guards them is not the brown serpent that you see all too often winding in and out among the delicately brilliant flowers, but the fever which stalks perennially over the vast fen.

Here and there islands rise out of the morass. Santa Maria in Porto fuori raises its tower, once a lighthouse to the Roman fleets, still a Christopher to the devout peasant. A cross placed on a marble

pillar shows the site of the basilica of San Lorenzo in Cæsarea. Finally, three miles of the old Flaminian Way bring us to a great lonely church, "bearing its huge, long back along the low horizon like some monster antediluvian saurian, the fit denizen of this marsh world." This is the basilica of San Apollinare in Classe, the last building of the great age of Ravenna and sole vestige of the town of Classis. Less well preserved than its namesake of the city, it is, since the destruction of San Paolo fuori le Mura, the best example of the manner in which rows of symbolical figures and pictures in mosaic were employed in the decoration of church interiors. Here is a complete collection of the symbols of Christian art, — "the whole sacred menagerie;" and every emblem, from the simple monogram to the figure of the Fisherman, may be found by the student of Christian archæology.

The walls, ravaged by that enemy of Mother Church, Sigismondo Malatesta, have been conscientiously restored, but the mosaics of the apsis are ancient, and in them as on a gorgeously illuminated page we may read the glorification of the church of Ravenna, — that church which, sustained by Byzantium, claimed an equality with Rome and tried to place its patron, Saint Apollinaris, on a spiritual level with Saint Peter. Of the fruitlessness of this attempt, the utterly desolate basilica, cold with the chill

of twelve hundred winters, is an eloquent witness. The portraits of the one hundred and thirty archbishops of Ravenna, a ghostly synod, still throning it over dead Christian quarrels, look down upon the poisonous water which in spring invades the nave and with the scummy surface of its gilded pools appears to mock the color of the mosaics. The latter, important as they are to the student of church history, are artistically an anticlimax to one who comes to them from the nobler and more richly colored mosaics of San Vitale, and it is hardly worth while to dilute the strength of the impression made by the earlier and finer work. As the shadows climb the still ruddy tower, an earthy chill fills the air, the huge, deserted church begins to cover its rough façade of brickwork with a clinging cobweb-like robe of fever mist, and we hurry away to the Pinetum.

After the Byzantine church-builders, seven centuries of oblivion followed for Ravenna, when the greatest name of the Italian middle ages, that of Dante, illustrated her again. He died here in exile, and the Piazza of San Francesco, where he lies buried, epitomizes Ravenna, — Greek, mediæval, and republican. There, in the pleasant sunlight under the Gothic arches, are the sarcophagi of early Christians, dispossessed now and tenanted by Ravennese lords of the middle ages; opposite is the

accredited house of Francesca da Rimini; Lord Byron's window is just beyond; at one's right is the tomb of Dante; and at one's left, loaded with wreaths, a memorial tablet to Mazzini; the "Divine Comedy," "Childe Harold," and the epopœa of modern Italian independence! Could one ask for richer suggestiveness of art and history? It is, indeed, almost too rich and too complex. Here in Italy, where the civilizations overlie one another, and where history is piled strata upon strata, we are perforce obliged to limit our impressions. In this land which has been so much lived in, where there has been so much doing and undoing, so over-much hating and loving, memories are importunate and spirits defy exorcism. On every hand the illustrious or romantic past crowds in upon the mind. The Greek jostles the Etruscan; the Mediæval treads on the heels of the Roman; Goth and Lombard trample down the Byzantine; the Mediæval burgher is hard pushed by the man of the Renaissance, and the Garibaldino elbows the soldier of the French Republic. Each small city in the long list of Italian towns is in one sense a microcosm of the history of Italy. An arbitrary election of certain aspects of such a city for contemplation is almost involuntary, and becomes our only defence against an overwhelming host of recollections and associations.

The art-lover, however, finds his field of contemplation much more restricted. Dealing with what actually exists, not what has been, with only the tangible vestiges of the past, his limitations of vision and suggestion are instinctive rather than voluntary. To him Ravenna is a reflection of Byzantium, and evokes a clear, sharply defined image. But to the student of events or manners or modes of thought how much Ravenna stands for! to him the epoch of Byzantine rule is but one of the pages in her civic annals. The mere name of the city fills his mind with long lines of figures which file through the mean streets of the decaying town like the mummers in a Renaissance "progress." Theodoric, Boëthius, Amalasuntha; traits in the Northern Italians of to-day which bear witness to the enduring character of the Gothic conquest; axioms from the "Consolations," the chariot roll of Gibbon's periods, — are suggested by a fragment of wall or by the tomb of the Ostrogoth, with its strange dome like a gigantic wassail cup turned upside down. French and Italian soldiers in serried charge or orderly retreat; Spanish veterans; Bayard and the "Loyal Serviteur;" the young general who lies in effigy at Milan,— whirl past the banks of the Ronco summoned by a glimpse of the besmirched *Colonna dei Francesi*. The decaying palace wall of the Polentani conjures up the little shade of the child

Francesca before "*Amor, ch'a cor gentil ratto s'apprende,*" led her to Paolo and death. The Italians, who of all men love a lover best, will point you out her image on the frescoed wall of Santa Maria in Porto, where a slender Salome, arbitrarily christened Francesca, receives the adoring homage of the youth of Ravenna, which youth, being ardent, romantic, and unoccupied, cultivates the emotions. To a less sentimental spectator these battered frescoes may serve to raise a sturdy, cheerful, Tuscan ghost, for here Tradition will have it, though Research gives her the lie, Giotto painted and chatted with his exiled friend, the poet whom Ravennese goodwives declared had descended into hell, bringing back its gloom on his stern face.

The Pinetum is an enchanted wood for the lover of letters. To him the giant pines will sing the praises of Dante, and he will find their solemn aisles a fitter memorial to "il Divino" than the prim cupola which rises over his bones. Shades of Boccaccio and Byron and Alfieri people the forest glades, and the tortured wraith of the once cruel lady who in defiance of the mediæval law, "*Amor a nullo amato amar perdona,*" dared "to fly from a true lover."

The Guiccioli palace suggests a comparison to the Italy of Dante and the Malatesta, and the Italy of opera and *cicisbei,* but they are hardly farther asunder than are the two heroines for

whom liberal-minded Ravenna has named her squares of Bice Portinari and Anita Garibaldi. The Pinetum is hallowed not only by the radiant apparition of Beatrice, "vested in colors of the living flame," but by the grave of Anita. Here, literally hunted to death, Garibaldi's heroic wife died of exhaustion while flying with her husband from the Austrian soldiery, and not the least tragic of the city's memories is the poignant story of that breathless chase.

The modern Ravennese, oppressed perhaps by their mighty heritage, turn from an aristocratic and feudal past to vote for Cipriani, a candidate who was sent to the galleys for his political opinions. *Sono un popolo cattivo*, a conservative Italian acquaintance assured us, which we translated Radical Republican, after reading the election posters. It is a not uncommon evolution, this of Ravenna *l'antica*, from Cæsarism to Populism, especially in Italy, where scarcity and excessive taxation stimulate hostile criticism of existing forms of government.

In spite, however, of the veneer of more recent epochs, of literary associations and of mediæval episodes, Ravenna will remain the typical Byzantine town, and her abiding attraction will always be her churches, which, like the agate and onyx of the desert, rough-crusted and ugly without, are within all glorious.

# SIENA

# SIENA

## I

Siena, like a true daughter of Rome, is throned superbly upon many hills, but the wolf and the twins watch over a mediæval city, and the ancient *Colonia Julia Senensis* holds higher than any other Italian town, save Florence, the double symbol of church and state in the middle ages, the tower of the cathedral and of the public palace.

We have seen the city in many phases: under black clouds, with the hailstones shining in stormy struggling sunlight against the sculptures of Fonte Gaia and the rain-streamlets rushing down its steep streets, and we have seen it set like a town in a missal-border against a still, flat, blue background of sky; we have seen it from the terraces of the Osservanza rising above its walls, which overhung the intermediate valley, and from distant, southern Monte Oliveto, its towers of the Mangia and the Cathedral dwindled to mere pin-points. We have strolled through its narrow streets at all times and all seasons; have blinked at the dazzling façade of the Duomo in the glare of noon, and lingered in

the great Campo when it lay white and still in the chill moonlight. We have watched the gray, bleak hills on which the town is pedestalled turn to freshest, tenderest green; we have climbed the slopes of the olive orchards and looked through scurrying snowflakes at the ramparts rising above us, and from every point, from without her gates and within her walls, from the towers above and the valley below, Siena makes one impression only upon us: Etruscan town, Roman colony as she was, the middle ages set their seal upon her, and she is the typical Gothic city of Tuscany, almost of Italy.

Verona is Siena's only rival; but Verona is rosy and smiling, Siena is brown and truculent. She has clutched sword and shield so tightly that she can never quite lose the cramped look of the defensive attitude; unlike Florence, she has not unclasped her knightly girdle of battlements, and the gates with port and ante-port complete are far finer than those by the Arno; the Romana and the Pispini look to this day as if Monluc were still defending within and Duke Cosimo besieging without.

Gothic, Siena was, not only in her outward appearance, but in her spirit, in her ideals, and in her art; Gothic in her triple aspect of warrior, saint, and sybarite. She fought with spiritual arms as well as with actual weapons; she wore the cowl

over the helmet, and the hand which held the sword had grasped the scourge. She was not truculent only; under the steel hauberk was the embroidered surcoat of knight and minstrel, and under the nun's rough hair-cloth the mystic ecstasy of Saint Catherine. The *Civitas Virginis* was also the *Molles Senæ* of Beccadelli's poem, the city of soft delights, of the pleasure-seekers of Folgore's sonnets, of the rakes and bruisers of Sermini's and Fortini's tales. It was the home of the love-story (*la novella amorosa*); and it was in this stronghold of saints and popes, of pietistic painters and devout conservatives, that the latent hedonism which underlay all the apparent asceticism of mediæval thought and life took artistic form.

There is a story told by the Sienese chroniclers which seems prophetic of the city's attitude toward the Renaissance. In the early fourteenth century an antique statue of Aphrodite was found in an orchard near the town, — a relic probably of the ancient Roman burg. Enthusiasts ascribed it to Lysippos, and when the new conduits were finished and water flowed for the first time in the great square, the image was set above the fountain which was called Fonte Gaia, because of the joy the people felt at the sight of it, some said, though others affirmed that it was named to honor the goddess of love and laughter.

For fourteen years the statue stood with the water flashing at its feet, and during these years faction raged more hotly than ever before; the Campo was a field of slaughter, and the fountain ran red, as bleeding partisans crawled to its margin to drink and die. It seemed as though strife were mingled with its ripples and discord welled from its brim. It was whispered that these contentions were due to the honor paid to a heathen idol which had usurped the place of Siena's celestial suzerain, and that peace would not be restored to the city until the goddess was cast out. The mediæval citizen knew his classics well enough to remember the mischief Dame Venus had wrought in Troy-town.

The whispers became murmurs, the murmurs ominous growls; finally the Council of the Twelve decreed the removal of the statue, and in order that its maleficent powers might be utilized for Siena's welfare, it was buried with thrifty hatred *on Florentine soil.*

Thus was antiquity banished from Siena, and when all Italy welcomed the Renaissance, she shut her gates against it; her painters turned with pious horror from the study of nature and sprinkled holy water on heathen sculpture; her inspired saints looked with contempt on the wisdom of the pagan, and her fierce, luxurious nobles had no mind to

dim their bright hawk eyes over "brown Greek manuscripts."

It is difficult, almost impossible, to explain the unique attitude of Siena toward the new movement. Was it because in the forefront of the Renaissance marched those hated Florentines, her hereditary foes? Was it the natural conservatism of the mountaineer, or the mental immutability of the devotee, who regarded all innovations as sacrilegious? Was it the old civic jealousy taking a new form? Did Siena feel instinctively that the vertical, irregular, picturesque, Gothic architecture was more suited to a hill-town than the porticoes and pediments of the Renaissance? Had mediæval painting become so identified in men's minds with the religion it served that to abandon the one seemed like renouncing the other as well?

Perhaps all of these considerations consciously and unconsciously influenced the action of the Sienese toward the revival of culture. At first they resisted it as fiercely as they had the invading Florentine armies; and while contemporary Tuscan painters were eagerly studying nature and antiquity, they were reproducing the old, bedizened, Byzantine Madonnas. When every Italian architect elsewhere was designing cupolas and colonnades, Siena's builders still clung to the Gothic; Orvieto sent to them for master-workmen for the cathedral until



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1450, and Gian Galeazzo Sforza summoned Francesco di Giorgio to compete for the façade of the great church of Milan as late as 1490.

Finally, when all Italy was permeated with the new spirit and Siena was forced to open her gates to Pinturicchio and Sodoma and Rossellino, it was too late; the creative power of the mighty impulse was exhausted, and among the great artists of the sixteenth century we do not find one Sienese. Siena had but a brief span of time in which to accustom herself to the new order of things, for in 1555 she fell, sword in hand, bravely defending her liberty. After her fall, utterly broken in spirit, she had neither the money nor the inclination to follow strange fashions, and in her many misfortunes was fortunate in this, that no tawdry and pretentious seventeenth century, no rococo and pedantic eighteenth century, marred her stern grandeur and her delicate grace.

The history of Sienese art began with the victory of Monteaperto (1260) and ended in the middle of the sixteenth century with the extinction of Sienese independence (1555). It has three distinct phases of development, — Gothic, Gothic modified by foreign influence, and Renaissance art, the work of the strangers or of Sienese masters imitating the work of strangers. These different stages of growth may be studied in the Public Palace, filled with frescoes

where Sienese painting is most at home; in the cathedral where the mediæval artist begins to yield to external pressure, and in the private palaces and lesser churches where the Renaissance eventually triumphs over the native style. Finally, the complete evolution of local painting from the early Byzantine to the late Roman manner may be seen in the municipal picture-gallery.

The city itself is a gallery of pictures. The walls form a triangle with its base to the south, and near the centre of this triangle rises the Duomo upon the crest of the highest hill. Below it to the east is the civic heart of the city, the Campo, strangest of squares, shaped like a great oyster-shell, with the communal palace at its lower lip and holding one precious pearl, Fonte Gaia.

Between the cathedral and the town hall cluster palaces with the famous names of Nerucci, Spanocchi, Saraceni, Piccolomini, and Tolomei; while the conventual churches are, as usual, nearer the walls where the brethren may have gardens and orchards. Saints Dominic and Francis are honored mightily in Siena in huge piles to west and east of the city's centre, and a daughter of Dominic has made "the noble district of the Goose" almost as famous as the Porziuncula of the Assisan saint. The Concezione and Sant' Agostino to south and southwest are imposing masses of church and con-



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vent and cloister. Peruzzi's Campanile of the Carmine and the towers of San Francesco and San Domenico are simple in line and fine in effect. The town walls, these churches and campaniles with the two focal and ever present points of the Cathedral, and the soaring Mangia tower make up the general outline of Siena.

For the detail we must climb twisting streets with clean, flat pavements and never a sidewalk, where there are no rough walls, as at Perugia, but all the masonry is neatly faced, and no sally as of German oriel or French overhanging stories, not even the protruding, grated windows of Florence, break the smoothness of the Tuscan Gothic; here the iron shuts down flatly and sternly within the shallow, pointed recess, but on every side there is a wealth of exquisitely wrought torch-and-banner-rings. The palaces of the great Ghibelline nobles cluster together around the Cathedral and the Campo; the Pecci with its lion-guarded staircase, the Buonsignori, the Salimbeni, are purely Sienese in style. The latter rises high above a valley and recalls Or San Michele in its height and squareness; the Governo and the Spanocchi, on the contrary, are purely Florentine, though here and there are details indicative of the more florid local taste. The Tolomei is the most famous of them all, not for the stately elegance of its façade, but because here, as every

Sienese will tell you, lived the hapless Pia. The story of this gentle victim of jealousy and malaria is told in a few lines by Dante, and every Tuscan knows the tale as well as that of Francesca da Rimini. When we returned to Florence, Checha, our maid, asked eagerly if we had seen Casa Tolomei.

The beautiful hammered iron-work, a native product, seems to combine naturally with the brick, and among the cities which possess a distinct type of domestic architecture Siena deserves a high rank. Her palaces unite the lightness of the Bolognese and something of the richness of the Venetian styles to the stern Gothic character of the Florentine; and though the magic wand of the *cinquecento* has waved over the bronze and marble which burst into acanthus flower and curling scroll-work, and Tuscan masters, in the ring of their chisels, have awakened echoes of the Via Larga and Via Strozzi, in the main lines of the façades Siena has clung to the character that marked the days of Monteaperto. Excellent restoration is being done in these Sienese palaces and streets. It consists mainly in removing the panels or the bricks which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were used to hide good Gothic work. Nowhere else in Italy have we heard so much talk of restoration. Even the conservative Franciscan brother at the Osservanza and the Benedictine Padre at Monte

Oliveto shared this interest. "Those saints are well enough in Paradise, but here with this fifteenth-century architecture they are out of place," said the latter, pointing to some haloed eighteenth-century sentimentalities simpering in their rococo frames. "Ah!" sighed our driver, "if they would only take away all the ugly things stupid people have put here, *Siena sarebbe bellissima*."

Siena is *bellissima*, in spite of this occasional veneer of later times, and among her most charming features are her fountains. There is Fonte Nuova lying, a still sheet of silver, under its Gothic arches, Fonte Ovile crowned with green, and Fonte Branda, clear as crystal.

For Saint Catherine's sake, we visited Fonte Branda in the early morning, scrambling down the steep path under blossoming trees and tufted greenery until San Domenico towered just above our heads on its hill-pedestal. All about us was the pungent smell of tan, and at our hand sheep's peltries lay upon wicker ovals, for all the world as if some thirsty Roman maniple had stopped to drink at the fountain and thrown its shields upon the grass. Above, the cavalry men lounged on the parapet before the church where Benincasa's daughter saw the celestial vision; before us the washer-women pounded away at their linen; farther on, outside the gate, the city wall climbed at a

sharp angle to where the Cathedral rode upon the highest ridge, the campanile holding aloft above the tiles and towers the black and white of the republic's arms.

Perhaps one's most vivid impressions of Siena as a whole are these fountain-side visions of the uplifted city; to close the eyes is still to see the narrow ways climbing the slopes and piercing brown arches; the close-set houses sweeping like billows now downward, now upward, tossed here and there into higher jet of palace or church, breaking into a spray of towers, till all are crested by the foam-like sculpture of the Duomo.

And the fountains themselves, lying flat and mirror-like with still depths and glistening surface, dancing in reflection upon the brown, groined vaulting above. They are wholly different from any others, these grottoed wells of Siena, strange presences in a city, bringing within the walls the sense of caverned, mountain-springing waters. Each with its crown of verdure is an Egeria to whom the mediæval Numa might come for counsel and for peace; a Gothic Egeria under her pointed arches, for from Siena antiquity is thrust out. Here the nymph is haloed; close draped from throat to heel, she passes, and the idyl itself is fixed upon a background of gold.

If we return with the mediæval law-giver to his

palace, we shall find ourselves in the vast, curving Campo. Geologists say that Siena is built on an extinct volcano and this square occupied the place of the old crater. Any student of the city's political history will find a singular appositeness in this site, for the old fire blazed perennially in the hearts of the citizens and within the walls of the municipal palace. For here it sits in state with its graceful Mangia tower and a solemn assembly of palaces fronting it in amphitheatre. Before it once stood the monumental Virtues of Jacopo della Quercia's fountain, now mere battered fragments in the Museum; beside it soars the Mangia; not as audacious as the bell-tower of the old palace of Florence, it is more aspirant and equally individual, with its shooting stem, its bracketed battlements, its pillar-surrounded bells and its sculptured wolves.

The little chapel before the palace, an *ex voto* of the plague of 1348, though graceful in itself, is an excrescence, and the huge building is far finer seen from the rear. From under the beamed roof and between the pillars of the market-place it looks the Gothic palace of the chronicles; its grating might surely imprison every possible fantasy, every nightmare horror. Here should be cobwebs, bloodstains, and *oubliettes* by day, lurking assassins and bleeding spectres by night, enacting the secret dramas of the archives and passing up and down that mouldering

staircase (like those we climb in dreams), which goes burrowing through the pile, now low, now aloft, now corbelled on the outside of the building, now disappearing under a dark arch to lead on to a vast loggia where a whole city council might sit *al fresco*. The façade, a monstrous mass of brick, opens a hundred Argus eyes of every size and shape, and other windows still have been blocked up; above them are strange, string-course eyebrows; there are long wrinkling cracks in the brick-work; the gratings show like clinched teeth; this grim visage of the olden time is set firmly against all the mischance of five hundred years, and frowns even under the caress of the Tuscan sunshine.

Turning from the palace, one finds oneself in the centre of a horseshoe with the piled up Carmine and Sant' Agostino on the spurs of rock which form each side of it. From one's feet the valley dips away rapidly and deeply in range behind range of low volcanic hills, till Monte Amiata pencils its snow-crested sky-line against the southern horizon. Thus sits the palace of the republic, the focal point of a double amphitheatre natural and artificial, of palaces upon one hand, of *contado* upon the other, telling to those who can hear aright the story of six hundred years and marking every hour that is added to the tale of centuries.

Within it is far more unchanged than is the

Palazzo Vecchio of Florence; there Michelozzo and Benedetto remodelled Arnolfo's hall, but Siena seems to have instinctively understood that her glories came earlier, and she clung to them. These rooms are mediæval; the original construction is hardly changed, and the prevailing impression is one of half savage, clumsy grandeur made more emphatic by the pure Gothicism of their decoration, — a Gothicism which is rather belated for the time. There is little of the thoughtful and balanced ornament of the contemporaneous chapel of the Spaniards in Florence, and little of the austere elegance of the Bargello.

During the turbulent life of the old commonwealth generation after generation of artists was called to embellish this house of the people. It was the central jewel of the city's civic crown, the theatre of her municipal dramas, the focus of her political life. As such, it was loved and respected by all the different factions which each in its turn ruled and misruled Siena. The decoration of the palace went steadily on, no matter who held the reins of government. Defeated candidates might be thrown from the windows, riot might break up the council, strife disperse the magistrates, the painters' stipends were punctually paid. Minorities flew to arms and majorities abused their victories; delation whispered in dark corners, and party hatred

hunted its victims through these echoing chambers; the *frescanti* labored quietly on, celebrating the republic's triumphs, the glories of her popes, or the coronation of her heavenly sovereign, and through the dissensions which made Siena a byword for civic discord, the famous artists of the school, Martini and Lorenzetti and Quercia and Lando, left their handwriting on these walls and made of this the typical town-hall of Italy.

In the Sala del Gran Consiglio, divided nearly down the centre by a line of heavy arches, Sienese painting may be seen at its best and worst. In Simone's great lunette filled by a charming and astonishingly decorative composition there is beauty of a delicate character in the heads of the saints, and the narrow-lidded, purse-mouthed Madonna has a grace and distinction unknown to Giotto. But in Ambrogio di Lorenzo's battle of Turrita (1363), where the little jointed lay figures move across a flat, map-like background showing every hill and stream and hamlet conscientiously labelled, the painter becomes a child with a big slate, and his picture is as *naïf* and confused as a battle on an Egyptian pylon. The Renaissance, however, has passed this way and left Sodoma's Roman warrior-saints Victor and Ansanus, noble and vigorous youths, visions of antique health and beauty among these mediævals, and as unexpected

here as Scipio would have been at Monteaperto. On the wall above them is a return to the Gothic art of Siena, and against a vast field a little, solitary Guidoriccio, captain of the republic, rides, like a mattress on horseback, in commemoration of the siege of Montemassi (1328).

But Gothic painting can show us something finer than this. Passing through the left nave or antechapel, we find ourselves in the *Sala della Pace*, the Hall of Peace. In 1337 Ambrogio Lorenzetti began to work on these walls. His business was to demonstrate the principles and blessings of good government and the evils of misrule, and to express them in that figurative language which could be read by all the citizens alike, even by the peasant and the wool-carder. Lorenzetti, who was something of a philosopher, Vasari tells us, put the symbolism of his time to good use, and though to us the thread of allegory may seem too finely spun, the didactic purpose did not exclude beauty of a noble and monumental character, and the frescoes are a mural decoration as well as a painted treatise.

Among these attendant Virtues of the well-governed state, each one gowned to the feet, sitting grave and stately in a solemn row like the sculptured figures on a mediæval reliquary, there is one that reclines, her wreathed head resting on her hand. Helmet and shield lie under her feet, she

holds the olive branch like a sceptre, and her semi-transparent robe hangs ungirdled like an antique tunic.

This is the celebrated Peace which seems to have floated hither from a Pompeian wall, a Pagan goddess, perhaps a Venus Victrix consorting with these Christian Virtues. How came she here? Symonds suggests that this figure was copied from the mischief-making Aphrodite of Lysippos. Ambrogio had made a fine drawing from the statue, which Ghiberti admired many years afterward. By an irony of fate the goddess banished from the square sat in the council-chamber. And if her influence was indeed malign, if her own apple of discord had been thrown down among the magistrates, she could not have looked upon wilder deeds than those that were constantly enacted here. It was not the painter's fault. Had he not demonstrated that the commonwealth should be surrounded by all the Virtues, Cardinal, Christian, Pagan; that its right should be supported by armed might; that the ruling body of twenty-four citizens should be united by concord and governed by justice? Had he not also with rare political sagacity shown the relative importance of the various virtues by the different scales adopted for their personifications; thus in civic administration faith is of small importance while justice is essential. To prevent

all possibility of mistake, their names are plainly written over all the figures, and ribbons and scrolls materially bind the elaborate allegory together, while the whole scheme with its hierarchy of municipal Virtues was doubtless suggested by some erudite student of Aristotle or of Dante's *De Monarchia*. The painter has also shown the practical effects of good and bad government in a spirited series of *genre* pictures, — episodes of contemporary town life which appealed directly to the spectator's memories and experience.

Truly the philosophic Ambrogio was not to blame if Siena was "*un guazzabuglio ed una confusione di republiche piutosto che bene ordinata e instituta republica.*"

Republic, commonwealth, the names are misleading and suggest to the modern mind something akin to our own form of popular sovereignty. A nominal vassalage to a German Cæsar; a struggle for independence; a governing body or *Monte* composed of patricians; a popular revolution: a *Balia* of merchants; an uprising of the artisans; native despotism, and finally submission to a foreign tyrant, — this is a fair synopsis of the history of the Sienese republic, nay, of many Italian republics as well. "*C'est la ville qui se gouverne plus follement que toute ville d'Italie*," wrote grave De Commines a century and a half after Ambrogio finished his

fresco, and mad indeed Siena must have been to merit this distinction.

Imagine a state governed by miracles, a state which sent ecstatic nuns and socialistic painters on important embassies; where the saints themselves became politicians, and the celestial court terrorized or bribed voters by visions and prodigies; where a rain of blood or some such manifestation of divine displeasure about election time would upset the existing government and carry the entire opposition into office at one sweep; where, when the victors had murdered, confiscated, and exiled sufficiently to produce a popular reaction of feeling, a third party would appear to repeat the same blunders and excesses. Sometimes a holy personage would have a revelation, and in obedience to the divine mandate the whole city would turn out in penitential procession. Radicals and conservatives, aristocrats and artisans, their shoulders bleeding from the lash, knelt together on the cathedral pavement and swore on the great crucifix to live in peace together forever after. Eight pages of blood-curdling maledictions were then read, wherein he who should break his oath was cursed thoroughly and comprehensively (for cursing was a fine art in the Middle Ages with a vigorous vocabulary). Afterward the notaries of the rival factions wrote down the names of those who had sworn to main-

tain public tranquillity, and the adverse parties fell on each other's necks. But the penitential torches were hardly spent, the swords which Religion bade men leave at the church-door were scarcely sheathed, when, in spite of anathema, they were out again and all parties were fighting once more.

The acts of the popular government (*Novesch*i) were prophetic of the darkest days of the Reign of Terror in France. There were clubs like the Jacobins; secret societies; lists of the suspected; spies in the prisons and revolutionary tribunals, and yet amid all this disorder the virtues of self-sacrifice, fidelity to friends and comrades; devotion to an ideal; fortitude and courage, all these qualities that are developed by the militant attitude of the soul, flourished as they never can in an industrial republic.

## II

A FAINT echo of the old contests has lasted even to our own times, and on every fifteenth of August the Campo is again the theatre of strife. The annual horse-race, the *Palio*, is run here in honor of the city's patron, the Blessed Virgin; and Siena, which is frugal and sober enough for the rest of the year, becomes a boisterous, ruffling spendthrift during the *festa*.

This is no ordinary race, with professional jockeys, lean, glossy horses, and a quiet fashionable crowd of spectators betting in a bored and decorous way; this is a family affair of palpitating domestic interest. The cattle are the thick-necked, stout little nags that Beppo, the butcher boy, drives in his cart, and that Gigi, the green-grocer's son, rides out to the hillside farm, and the jockeys are Beppo and Gigi themselves and their ilk: the onlookers are their friends and relatives and rivals, the whole town of Siena, and every able-bodied peasant in the *contado* as well. It is only in Tuscany, where there is no "brutalized lower class," that such a work-a-day, popular affair could be a ceremony and a spectacle. Perhaps, too, the fact that the same thing has been done annually for the last

five hundred years has much to do with its picturesqueness.

These races are a contest between the seventeen different wards of Siena, a survival of the old party feuds. Each district contributes a horse and ten men dressed in mediæval costume. A few hours before the race, each horse is blessed in the parish church of the *contrada* to which it belongs.

One is rather impressed with the sporting character of the local saints; they are debonair, these celestial potentates, and sometimes even playful, so that to the modern shopkeeper it seems as natural to ask their good-will for the horse that is to run for the honor of Madonna and the district, as it was for the mediæval noble to hang the wax image of his pet hawk before their altars.

The little company which enters the church with the plunging, rearing horse looks as though it were contemporary with the hawk's master. There is the captain of the district, elderly, bearded, in full armor; the rider wearing the helmet which later he will change for a metal jockey-cap; the standard-bearers, the drummer, the dear, little solemn pages who might have come hither from some altar-piece of Botticelli or some pageant of Gozzoli. All are splendid in satin trunks, brocaded doublets, velvet mantles, and the tightest of pink fleshings, while each tiny red cap is perched on

a mass of fuzzy hair. The fine costumes are worn with ease and grace, though the beauty of the Italian youth is rather that of the faun than the athlete. Everybody is very much in earnest and quite lacking in the self-consciousness which would paralyze a Northerner tricked out in tights and long curls.

When the horse reaches the high altar, he is blessed and sprinkled with holy water and led away with much cheering. The church has lent its aid to help him win the banner, which, if he is successful, will hang with many others, some of them centuries old, in the sacristy. The Campo is also in gala dress. The grim palaces are all aflaunt with banners, shields hang from every window, and brilliant colors float from every balcony. Over the pavement a track of earth has been laid for the *Palio*, going entirely around the Piazza; barriers have been placed along the inner side of the half-circle thus formed, and on the outer edge there are tiers of seats built up against the surrounding house-walls.

Toward the *Ave Maria* every balcony, window, and bench is filled, even the roofs are crowded, and into the central space behind the barriers some twenty thousand peasants have wedged themselves, the braided gold of their huge straw hats flapping with anticipatory excitement.

The course is cleared by mounted carabineers, and the procession begins. First in orthodox, festival fashion comes the town band in dark blue uniforms, then trumpeting loudly, nine heralds who surely must have figured at some mediæval tournament; the companies of the various districts follow, a stream of rich color against the palace walls; the standard-bearers playing graceful tricks with their flags, the captain with his escort of four pages armed with lances, the *figurino*, most gorgeous of all, carrying the ward-banner with its emblem, and lastly the *fantino* on horseback. The pageant is closed by a modern facsimile of the *Caroccio* or battle-car taken from the Florentines at Monteaperto (1260), by the victorious Sienese, who in witness thereof set up its poles in their cathedral, and in many other ways keep the memory of this ancient victory green and Florence in a proper state of retrospective humiliation. Meanwhile the barebacked horses have been driven into a pen formed of ropes, and each rider has received his *nerbo* or whip made of ox-sinew, — a redoubtable weapon which he is permitted to use not only on his own horse, but on the rival jockeys and their horses as well. This brutal custom is undoubtedly a survival of earlier contests.

Finally all are mounted, a gun is fired, the rope drops: there is a rush, a many-colored flash, horses

and riders shoot out on the track and are off at last. One pony trips over the rope and falls like a stone with his rider, who lies motionless, while something redder than a blush streams over his cheek. "It is nothing, nothing," your neighbor on the balcony assures you; "those boys are made of india rubber; to-day they are mangled and killed, and to-morrow they will be amusing themselves."

The horses meantime are tearing around the palpitating piazza; the jockeys are flogging right and left with the cruel *nerbo*, and a wave of excitement follows them. It is a fine sight; the riders have neither saddles nor stirrups and are one with their mounts, but Sienese youth is guileless; there are no turf tricks here, no dark horses, no husbanding of speed until the decisive moment. Bear gets the lead early in the race, keeps it and wins by two lengths amid deafening cries of "*Orso, Orso!*" There is a deep growl from the conquered *contrade* and a rush for the winner, but the Italian policemen, those lions of martial aspect and fierce mustachios, those lambs of gentle courtesy and softest speech, have already closed around him. They protect him until his company rallies and escorts him in triumph to the church again, where he hangs up the prize banner.

The athlete who brought home the wild olive crown from the Olympian games, the young Roman

who hung up a trophy in the Capitol, were probably not lacking in a proper appreciation of their own merits, but their bumptiousness was as the humility of cloistered maidens, compared to the vainglory of the youth who wins the *Palio*, if one may believe the local gossips. No wonder that Bazzi, that adopted son and spoiled child of Siena, who had gained many *palii* with his Barbary horses, was prouder of his prizes than of his paintings, and "would exhibit them to every one who came to his house, nay, he would frequently make a show of them at his windows," to the astonishment and disgust of that shrewd business man and conventional bourgeois, Giorgio Vasari.

## III

MUCH prose poetry has been written about the Sienese school of painting. Years ago Rio and Lindsay struck a note which finds an echo in the appreciation of the most modern critics. The literary *boulevardier* still worships at the shrines of the "*Madones aux longs regards*," and in their presence even the stern and suspicious disciples of the "Detective school" of art criticism cease to scrutinize and become lyrical. Perhaps no "Primitive" painting has inspired so much enthusiasm in men of letters.

A study of the Sienese pictures, while it affords little to justify these eulogies, stimulates a desire to discover why this mediocre art has proved so attractive.

We suspect that the panegyrists of the Sienese masters regarded them from the æsthetic rather than the plastic point of view; that they confused the material of representation with the manner of representation, the aspect of an actual object pleasing in itself with the pictorial presentation of such an object.

There are many different degrees of visual pleasure: iridescent glass, the changing lights of jewels, masses

of gold and color, the mere splendor of gold itself, and of "pure color unspoiled by meaning," are pleasant to look upon and possess intrinsic charm and value, a charm which appeals to the savage and the child as well as to the æsthetically cultivated, and which is "unvexed by thought."

There is joy for the eye as well in beautiful objects which are more highly differentiated, wherein color is wedded to design; in glistening tissues and in dusky webs of Oriental needlework, and in intricate mazes of tooling and damascening.

But there is a still sensuous but higher delight — higher in the sense that it demands far more of the beholder as well as of the artist — in color subordinated to form and meaning. It is undeniable that a nobler quality of appreciation is required to admire Titian's Flora or Veronese's Family of Darius than to appreciate a Persian tile or an Indian carpet.

It is to the more primitive æsthetic sense that the Sienese painter appeals. He was a cunning craftsman in the use of the gilder's tools. He could chase and damascene the most labyrinthine and exquisite of patterns. He had an Oriental's feeling for textile design and a goldsmith's love of minute and elaborate ornament. His inventiveness, limited to accessories, manifested itself in his treatment of them.

The undeveloped artist unable to paint beautiful pictures loves to paint beautiful things, — things

beautiful in themselves, — and he offers them (quite unconsciously) as substitutes for competent painting. Madonna's face may be a flat mask, her body a *simulacrum*, but her halo and mantle-clasp modelled in plaster, gilded and stuck on to the painted panel, will be admirably designed. The painter limited in his powers of expression gathers into his picture the material which in real life pleases him and his townsfolk, substituting suggestion for plastic realization. It is indisputable that suggestion is more stimulating to the art critic than actual pictorial achievement, which, possessing the means of complete expression, stands in far less need of being helped out, interpreted, and expounded than the imperfect or undeveloped work of art which is necessarily obliged to leave much to the imagination of the spectator. In the last instance the field is open to individual interpretation and for the formulation of theories.

The inarticulate work of art appeals to the critic; he "discovers" it, pleads for it, reveals it. Indeed, he soon ceases to see it objectively, and it often appears to him only through the medium which his own fancy has created. Why has so much been written about Botticelli and so little about Donatello? Why is Simone Martini more stimulating to eloquence than Veronese? Because Donatello and Veronese deliver their own message, while Botticelli and Mar-

tini are tentatively struggling for expression. The master-craftsmen need no apologists, and offer no handle to facile criticism. The impotent or imperfect Sienese painters, on the contrary, afford unlimited opportunity for the onlooker to do a little painting on his own account by the exercise of his own fancy.

The amateur is also apt to mistake rudimentary presentation of pictorial material for the voluntary simplification of such material. The eminently competent selection of the essential and the elimination of the non-essential is not easily distinguished by the untrained in such matters from the incompleteness which is the result of incompetence. Fourteenth-century "simplicity" is not the same thing as sixteenth-century generalization. The Sienese triptychs have a specious air of intentional limitation; their gorgeousness in color and ornament, their undeniable decorativeness, have been accepted as decoration, which is a very different thing. Their shortcomings, lack of solidity and of construction, to the eye of the practitioner, are those to which the man of letters was most indulgent in the days when "expression" and "feeling" were sought rather than values and "*enveloppement.*"

Perhaps it is also because this Sienese painting affords a tempting opportunity for the establishment of a rival cultus to that of the positive and realistic

Florentines. There are Aristideses in art and literature, and some critics weary of hearing Giotto called "the Just."

Finally, to analyze or define the enduring charm of a world-famous picture is a form of mental exercise; to rhapsodize over a Sano di Pietro or a Matteo di Giovanni, to ascribe spiritual significance and mystic meaning to works which are pictorially insignificant, is an inexpensive form of mental dissipation.

There is, on the other hand, no doubt that Siena produced great artists. But she possessed no great school, and the individuality which manifested itself so turbulently in municipal and domestic life ceased to express itself, with the notable exception of Jacopo della Quercia, in the fine arts at an early period of their development. The hand of tradition lay too heavily on her painters, and the history of Sienese painting may be written in three words: Duccio, Martini, Lorenzetti.

Thanks to the labors of Milanesi in the storehouse of Sienese archives, wherein are preserved all the contracts made by the republic since the twelfth century, we can calculate to a *soldo* what Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti were paid for their work, and lynx-eyed modern criticism has discovered that frescoes long ascribed to them were done by other hands; but of the personality of Simone, Petrarch's friend and painter of Madonna

Laura; of the character of Lorenzetti, whom Vasari records as leading the life of a gentleman and a philosopher rather than that of an artist; of the life of Duccio da Buoninsegna, the first master to show "feeling" and "expression" in his heads, — we know little save their names and their work.

But their work remains to praise them. Duccio's altar-piece, hidden for many years in a closet in the Opera del Duomo, is now placed where it can be seen and studied. Does it justify the opinion of those who consider Duccio a rival of Giotto, or has the Florentine still the cry? Take the best known of Duccio's compositions which through photography and engraving have become familiar to us: the Three Maries at the Tomb or the Betrayal of Christ, and place them beside Giotto's Death of Saint Francis or the Banquet of Herod.

The two masters are absolutely different in character. Duccio derives directly from the Byzantines. One would not be surprised to find his figures in a manuscript of the time of Alexander Severus by some illuminator who, though not as skilful as those iconographic sculptors who filled out the series of imperial busts, was nevertheless full of feeling for subtle beauty and graceful movement. Giotto is a pioneer, an innovator. In his paintings the mediæval Italian enters art as a pictured presence, not as the *larva* of the missal, but the real, living man

of the *Novelle* of Sacchetti. Imagine a Ravennese mosaic freed from its rigidity and made supple, the color somewhat blackened, the faces human and pleasing, and you have Duccio's figures. His art was born in the catacombs and bred at Mont Athos. Giotto's is a robust son of the people and of the busy battle-filled fourteenth century. Duccio lingers in the court of the Byzantine palace, but Giotto shoulders aside the gilded prætorian at its gate and goes out into the fields. Duccio is the descendant of the gentleman of the old Empire, with his refinement and his limitations. Giotto is the mediæval peasant, with all the peasant's vigor and capacity for continued effort. In some respects, Duccio surpasses Giotto, notably in subtlety of feeling for beauty in his heads and in a certain delicacy of sentiment, but Giotto is immeasurably Duccio's superior in inventiveness, in dramatic feeling, in composition, and, above all, in solidity. Duccio, for all his power and science, is still Byzantine. Taken altogether, Duccio is as distinctly a phenomenon as Giotto, but he is a phenomenon which closes an era, a sudden flash of flame springing high above the environment of all his fellows, but going out into darkness, whereas Giotto's is a steadily waxing light, the harbinger of the morning, indeed the day itself come to irradiate Italy and the world.

This cumulation which counts Giotto as an initial

force is so impressive to the student of art history that he is apt to slight Duccio as a phenomenon, but a little thought and study soon cause him to be regarded as almost as puzzling a survival as Giotto is a surprising precursor. Giotto, deriving from Giovanni Pisano, and from every other sound and progressive artistic influence of his time, is far more important than Duccio, but hardly more astonishing. If Giotto by strength, solidity, simplicity of feeling, clearness of vision, overtops his fellow painters and translates the vigor and dignity of Giovanni Pisano's marbles on the flat surface of wall or panel into a far freer and nobler composition, Duccio too has so bettered all his instructors that he in turn seems phenomenal.

Every great artist is more or less of a Janus, looking backward to his master and his master's master, and forward to a future of personal progress. Duccio looks only backward, but how far he looks, how clearly he sees, and beside him what blind bunglers are the monk-bred painters, his contemporaries, when they strive to learn from Byzantine illumination, mosaic, or ivory carvings! Much has been written, and well written, about Duccio's feeling for expression, for pathos, for poignant presentation of heart-stirring scenes; what is even more worthy of note is a technical knowledge and capacity which (always relatively considered) are amazing. Look at the

delicate feet and hands of his apostles; study their faces, which are not only differentiated but individualized, and sometimes almost skilful in drawing. Their painter saw over the heads of his contemporaries far back into the times of those great forefathers of whom he is the unique descendant; it is as though Duccio turned monkish Latin into the language of Claudian.

In elegance, grace, subtlety of feature, slenderness of proportion, Duccio excels; in vitality, in freedom of thought, as well as in robust solidity and noble simplicity of composition, Giotto leaves him hopelessly behind, for if Duccio is the final efflorescence of the old, Giotto is the blossom of the new art.

Petrarch, the first of the literary admirers of the Sienese school, wrote in a friendly rather than a judicial spirit the oft-quoted lines: "I have known two excellent artists, Giotto of Florence and Simone of Siena," for the latter with all his exquisite craftsmanship, his feeling for grace and sweetness and splendor, is by no means the equal of the great Florentine. These two painters represent the male and female principle in the art of the fourteenth century: Giotto robust, dramatic, daring; Simone delicate, conservative, poetic. Both of them are intensely sincere; both, if judged superficially, very similar, because controlled by the conventionalities

of the *trecento*. But compare one of the great frescoes of Giotto in the lower church of Assisi, or the Arena Chapel at Padua, with the lunette of Simone which fills one end of the main hall in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena. Giotto, like a *trecento* Raphael or Michelangelo, has thrown aside all superfluous ornament; Simone's fresco, on the other hand, is an expanded miniature, yet it is grand and lovely at once, and a very ideal decoration, intensely decorative to its every detail.

But how inferior to Giotto in simplicity and directness of composition are the frescoes in the church of St. Francis at Assisi, and how much more out of drawing than the least skilful of the Tuscan master's are the half length figures in the same church, delicate, thoughtful, and beautifully rich in color as they are! Yet in spite of his limitations, Simone is the worthy Sienese counterpart of the Florentine, standing to him in the fourteenth century in something the same relation that Botticelli bears to Ghirlandajo a hundred years later, with this difference — their positions are reversed, Giotto is greater than Martini, Botticelli greater than Ghirlandajo, or at any rate more individual.

The portrait of Laura which, if we may believe Vasari, Simone painted for Petrarch while he was in Avignon has disappeared. More by far than its original charm has come down to us in the two

sonnets which the grateful lover addressed to the artist. In Simone's time, portraiture, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist; the epoch of the portrait in the evolution of Italian art had not yet come, nor did it arrive until a century later. The authentic so-called portraits of the fourteenth century have little more than an archæological value. The painter might reproduce such obvious peculiarities as the cut of the hair and beard, the dress and headgear; these pictures are valuable to the student of costume and of general types, and are indispensable to the archæologist in all matters of identification and date; but the artist had not arrived at a point where he was able to individualize and characterize the features sufficiently to give a portrait any artistic or historical value. Simone was undoubtedly able to paint a head for Petrarch which represented the type of woman to which Laura belonged. Her blue eyes and her golden hair, her green velvet gown and the general aspect of a handsome gentlewoman of the fourteenth century, it was in the painter's power to render. But the picture not only satisfied but delighted Petrarch, and lovers are close observers of the face that is dearest to them and stern critics of attempts to reproduce its charm. Would Laura's poet, he who had lingered so lovingly on every detail of her "*divina sembianza*," have been transported by a mere general presentation, a kind of "ideal" head of

the pretty woman of the epoch? To this objection we may answer that Petrarch's opportunities of seeing his adored lady had been comparatively few; that Laura's image had become generalized in Petrarch's mind, and that he saw the actual woman through a kind of luminous mist created by his own unfulfilled desire, and by the spiritual aspirations which he had gradually habituated himself to associate with the thought of her. When we remember also that men seldom see in things plastic more than what they are taught to see, and that realism in art was as yet unknown, it is not so difficult to understand Petrarch's enthusiasm over Simone's picture.

Simone, as is natural enough in a pupil of Duccio, holds fast to the gold and purple of imperial tradition; he is under the shadow of the sceptre of Byzantium, and cannot win free. The spell of the effete, luxurious old civilization is on him. M. Lafenestre calls him "an exquisite, delighting in jewels of price and embroidered stuffs, an archæologist borrowing liberally from antique costumes and accessories." He manipulates this elegant detail easily and gracefully; to the taste for magnificence which he shares with all the artists of the Sienese school, he adds poetic feeling, and no painter of his day has rendered so winsomely the type which for a thousand years had incarnated man's desire for beauty.

His long-eyed, full-lipped Madonnas, jewelled like reliquaries, are gentler and sweeter sisters of the Empress Theodora. His narrow-lidded, aquiline profiles, anatomically absurd as they are, are potent to suggest beauty, and the puissance of such suggestion is not counteracted in the layman by the knowledge of the construction which Simone lacks.

Delicate, subtile profiles of Egyptian goddesses cut in lowest relief on dusky temple walls; Javanese dancers glancing sidewise under long eyelids tinged with kohl; slender, languid Coptic girls praying in the churches of Fostat, — such are the memories evoked by Simone's frescoes at Assisi and his "Majesty" in Siena. Indefinable yet penetrating is the Oriental influence, subtle as the scent of jasmine or sandal-wood which clings to the webs of Eastern looms.

Yet Simone is the child of the middle ages as well as the heir of Byzantium. They have dowered him with tenderness and sweetness, and he paints his Madonna "with a difference." His frescoes of the legend of Saint Martin might serve as illustrations (in the noblest sense) to some mediæval romance of chivalry, and his "Arming of the Knight" was painted with Folgore da Gimignano's sonnets under his eyes. The figures of his virgins and saints are visible signs of the changes that chivalry and Christianity had effected in the Byzantine ideal of femi-

nine beauty. It was not enough that Madonna should be stately, she must be compassionate as well; antique serenity was softened into gentleness, the physical perfection of Blessed Virgins and the holy women should not only fill the eye, it must *intenerire il cuore*. Sentiment, *gentilezza di cuore*, expression and mannered grace were what an emotional, fervent society wanted, and what Simone could express by delicate modifications and individual treatment of the old conventions. He bent the proudly erect head of the Byzantine Madonna, and turned it slightly sideways, and he elongated the face, giving it a more delicate oval. He lengthened and slightly raised the lower eyelids, thus lending to the eyes themselves the soft languor that the Greek sculptors never failed to give to the statues of Aphrodite. Thus was the dignified, Pagan patrician of the Ravennese mosaics transformed into the pensive, yearning, and, it must be confessed, sometimes petulant Madonna of the triptychs. It is a far cry from Queen Dido to Queen Iseult of Ireland, from Cornelia to Griselda; but it is hardly longer than from Our Lady of San Apollinare in Ravenna to Our Lady of the Palazzo Pubblico.

The third artist of the trio, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, is the most robust of the early Sienese masters. He is almost massive in his great decoration of the Municipal town hall, "Good and Bad Government,"

though on the same wall he proves, if not the flexibility of his genius, at least the catholicity of his taste in his readiness to look with as favoring eyes as Niccolà Pisano's own upon the antique, and to paint a Pax which reclines with as much freedom of movement as the Hera-Madonna on the Pisan pulpit.

In this vast composition there is nothing of the suavity and languid grace of Martini. Simone spangles his fresco with shining ornament till his saints seem so many mediæval Buckinghams shaking jewels from their garments. Lorenzo's frescoed folk are soberly, even severely suited; but Ambrogio, like Simone, is a poet, though he speaks more gravely, and he is a scholar, too, whose classical references make Simone's archæological paraphernalia seem almost coquettish. Ambrogio is sturdily simple where Simone is *précieux,* and robust where Simone is delicate, or even slightly affected.

In considerations of this kind, we must constantly bear in mind that these painters are primitive masters; that many of their qualities must be considered as purely relative; that correct drawing was to them an unknown quantity; that skilful modelling was as yet unattainable, and that they ignored anatomy, and were innocent of any knowledge of perspective. The portrait also did not exist in the *trecento* (despite the assertions of those eager friars whose proprietary in-

terest prompts them to find Laura and Petrarch, Dante and the Duke of Athens, *ritratti autentissimi*, on their church walls).

Yet it must be conceded that Lorenzetti, like Duccio and Martini, possessed qualities that were as positive as possible: virility, simplicity, dignity; his decoration in the Palazzo Pubblico, in which ethical significance is united to feeling for monumental mass and line and sensitiveness to human beauty, is the most impressive production of any native Sienese painter. The character of Lorenzetti's genius is well defined by the terms Antoninus employed in the description of his ideal being: "masculine, adult, political, a ruler, and a servant of the gods."

## IV

The triad of masters left no successors, and for more than a hundred years Sienese painting remained stationary. The condition of arrested development into which the *Giotteschi* sunk after the death of Giotto bade fair to become perennial in Siena.

The energy of her painters was diverted into other avenues. They became active politicians, sometimes party leaders, and their lives were as dramatic as their works were contemplative. A political career then exacted considerable expenditure of vital force, and but little remained for the pursuit of new methods in painting. Swaggering individualism is a very different thing from personality, and it is not surprising that the political activity and the revolutionary ardor of the painter-demagogues were only equalled by the intensity of their artistic conservatism. They are unique figures in the history of art and manners, and deserve a brief notice in any study of Siena.

Apparently it was not until after the great plague had levelled all ranks (1348), and the rise of the popular party, that the painters dropped the brush for the sword, and began to march under the banners

they had painted. Sons of the people, members of one of the lesser crafts, they were naturally factors in the political revolutions of 1368 and 1483, and were not only democrats but demagogues. Documents show us a certain type of populist painter directing public affairs, age after age, like that Andrea Vanni who was a correspondent of Saint Catherine. He expelled the nobles in 1368, was ambassador to the Florentines and to the Pope, became architect of the Duomo and Captain of the People; at the same time he followed his profession, painting the gonfalon of liberty for the Republic and the portrait of Saint Catherine now in San Domenico, setting the blazon of the Duke of Milan on the public palace, and filling orders for altar-pieces.

The Demos in Siena was a good art patron to the artist-partisans and a cruel master to a political opponent, as Jacopo della Quercia found to his cost. The government had plenty of commissions to bestow, and we find a political agitator like Benvenuto di Giovanni illuminating the choir-books of the cathedral and decorating the cupola; a practical politician, Giovanni Cini, painted the standard of Liberty, and forty years later, still in favor, restored his own work, which had been roughly handled. After the victory of Camollia, where he had fought as flag-bearer of his quarter, he was chosen to paint the votive picture which commemorated the triumph

of the Republic. It would be tedious to multiply examples: all through the history of Siena the artist is prominent as magistrate, innovator, soldier, often as conspirator. Even in the sixteenth century, when the older type of the citizen-painter was elsewhere supplanted by the court-painter, the Sienese still remained the turbulent burgher.

The biography of Pacchiarotto, one of the last of the native artists, reads like a romance of the French Revolution. He was in every tumult; when in 1520 the city was convulsed by an outbreak of party hatred, he was one of the faction which strangled Alessandro Bichi in the archbishop's palace, defeated the Pope's troops at Camollia, and defied Clement VII. by tearing the bull launched against Siena. Through him we have a glimpse of the populist clubs, those hot-beds of lawlessness. At first a member of the *Libertini*, he became later a leader of the *Bardotti* (the scot free), composed of Socialists or rather Communists of an advanced type, which for some time terrorized the town.

The *Bardotti*, who called Saint Catherine their patroness, met on Sundays to read Livy's Roman History, or Macchiavelli's Art of War, and to perfect themselves in fencing, for every man was bound to defend the institution at the sword's point, and to challenge any one who spoke ill of it. Apparently they fenced to some purpose, for the insolence of

these swashbucklers became so unbearable that the magistrates broke up the club. Pacchiarotto was imprisoned, ruined, exiled from Siena, with a price upon his head and a promise of a free pardon to whomsoever should put him to death. While trying to reach the church of the Osservanza for sanctuary, to escape pursuit he was forced to hide himself for two nights and days in a tomb with a corpse. After many other misadventures, he died in poverty and exile. Unfortunately, his most remarkable work has perished; on the walls of his own room he painted a multitude of figures kneeling, bowing, and prostrating themselves in various attitudes of deference and admiration. Here, surrounded by the homage so stimulating to the orator, amid a silence which was equally grateful, he rehearsed his political speeches, and triumphantly confuted his opponents' arguments. This art-work of poor Pacchiarotto may commend itself to a later age, an age of many clubs and over-much oratory, of willing talkers and reluctant listeners.

The ardent temperament which urged the artist into public life sometimes sought other forms of expression, and the Sienese painters were often zealous devotees. Many of them were workers in the noblest of the city's charities, the great hospital. Vecchietta left all his property to it, and Matteo di Giovanni, painter of hideous massacres, had charge

of a ward there, and is styled "*il fervoroso fratello*" in the records.

But the painter-saint of Siena, the "*Pictor famosus et homo totus deditus Deo*," was Sano di Pietro; he was a gentle spirit moving quietly among those sons of Thunder, his fellow craftsmen. Some of the scanty records of his blameless life are pathetic: thus the books of the parish prove that though very poor, with a wife and three little children to support, he had adopted an orphan "for the love of God." Sano, whose life was "one long hymn to the Virgin," was an innovator in his way; while the fire-eaters were as conservative in art as they were radical in politics.

To the readers of Rio and Lindsay, to the student of the evolution of art, the gallery of Siena possesses a unique interest. To the lovers of painting who admire a dexterous or scientific manipulation of material, or a pictorial and personal treatment of well known subjects, it will not appeal.

The first bewildered question it suggests is, where were the eyes of those art writers who compared this gallery with those of Florence, and who considered the Sienese as rivals of the early Florentine masters? The dates of the pictures show that these men were in the nursery, stumbling over the rudiments, while Filippino and Ghirlandajo and Botti-

celli were painting their frescoes. No wonder that the Sienese held fast to the Lombard Bazzi when he came a-visiting. Until then (1501) they had not seen an artist who had mastered his material.

While the Florentines were unearthing antiquity, discovering the laws of perspective, drawing from the nude and studying anatomy, their Sienese contemporaries were tranquilly copying Byzantine motives. The artists of Siena, dear to the writers on so-called Christian art, never passed through a period of experiment and investigation; they never originated, but were imitators, always taking their knowledge at second-hand, following, first, the Byzantine tradition, and later, the Roman school under Sodoma's influence; leaping at once from immaturity in Francesco di Giorgio and Matteo di Giovanni to decadence in Beccafumi and Peruzzi.

What then was their contribution to art?

The Sienese painter, as we have already seen, detached the Byzantine mosaic from the wall of the basilica; borrowing the old motives and types, he translated them into painting and produced the altar-piece. This triptych or diptych, which was not only set over the shrine, but found its way into oratory and bedchamber also, brought art into contact with daily life. He vivified Madonna; the stern, black-browed goddess of the churches of Ravenna became a gracious, fair-haired lady; the

attendant angels, instead of standing stiffly on either side of the golden throne, grew graceful and suppliant; the rigid, staring saints unbent a trifle, and occasionally there was an attempt at a dramatic gesture or a tender expression. Working in a more flexible medium, freedom of treatment grew little by little, until the painter had loosened the golden fetters of Byzantium and Art began to move. He could only loosen them, however. He still clung to the old forms for the brave soldier, the daring politician, was a timid conservative in his studio. Why, after taking the first step, did he stop short? Why, after having attained dramatic expression with Duccio, grace with Simone Martini, and grandeur with Lorenzetti, did he not march on with Giotto, with Masaccio and Lippo? Why, for two hundred years, did he move in a vicious circle?

The answer to this question may be found in a glance at the environment of the painter.

In Siena the two influences which powerfully affected Florentine art, the scholar's enthusiasm for antique beauty, the burgher's love of facts and exact detail, were lacking. Out of these apparently conflicting tendencies grew the great art of Florence and the Renaissance based on the study of antique sculpture and the observation of nature. But if Hellenism and shop-keeping obtained in Florence, mysticism and free-booting were characteristic of

Siena; she was as proud of her saints and her popes as her rival was of her poets and her historians and her woollens; the intelligent curiosity, the love of scholarship, the keen appetite for knowledge of the Florentine, were in the Sienese replaced by an ardent piety and an equally keen appetite for pleasure. The positive common-sense and the burgher virtues of Florence were despised in credulous and impassioned Siena. She had spurned antique beauty, and although two great sculptors, Jacopo della Quercia and Vecchietta, called Siena home, they had no influence apparently on her painters. Nor did these painters study Nature, for their environment acted upon them in a yet more direct and practical way. What the pious and unlettered Sienese required of them were images of devotion, not objects of art, something to pray to, not to criticise, a vision of Paradise, not a glimpse of every-day life.

From the collection of altar-pieces in the gallery, we can form a very clear idea of how the painters supplied this want.

The triptych was a favorite form, a *Maestà*, or Majesty (*i. e.* a Madonna and child sitting in state surrounded by saints and angels) the most popular subject. The Virgin, as befitted the sovereign of Siena, is always represented as an aristocrat, a potentate, a feudal princess. The Coronation and Assumption are painted again and again, but we

look in vain for a Nativity, an Adoration of the Shepherds, or of the *Magi*, subjects dear to the Umbrian and Florentine schools.

"To the Sienese the golden background was always inseparable from a devotional picture," wrote Rio in his "*Art Chrétien*," adding, "this must not be attributed to the narrowness of their views, but to the extreme orthodoxy of their taste." The background then behind the Queen of Heaven is of dazzling, unshaded gold, wonderful intricate patternings wander over the jewelled robes, real gems shine in the "rich fret of gold" on Madonna's head, the Saints are gorgeous in surcoats "embroidered like a mead," and the peacock-winged angels are no whit less fine. The Sienese had given the Byzantine Madonna life; the naturalistic Florentines made her human. They took the diadem from her brows; they despoiled her of her regal robes; they bade her rise and walk. In their hands, the bejewelled patrician became a proud young mother; the divine Child, the little jointed puppet who sat stiffly blessing a contemplating universe, a human baby who played and crowed and wondered at his own dimples, while meek Saint Joseph, who in Ravenna and Siena was banished altogether from the celestial court, enjoyed a sort of honorary Papaship, and helped the dear little attendant angels, just out of the nursery, to mind the baby.

In a word, the Holy Family became the Human Family.

The Florentine treatment of secondary figures, the introduction of portraits, of domestic animals, man's humbler brothers in the *Presepio*; the landscape backgrounds with their flower-enamelled meadows and winding streams, were almost as distasteful to the Sienese devotee as was the vulgarization of the Madonna. There was no feeling for out-door Nature in the gilded altar-piece; there a Midas touch had turned the flowers to goldsmith's work, and stiffened the glistening robes on the rigid limbs. Occasionally an artist made a timid effort to acquire a freer manner; but he was too weak to persevere, and he soon returned to the type that "extreme orthodoxy of taste," which was such a different thing from "narrowness of views," had fixed for him. Thus deprived of the influence of antiquity, of the study of Nature, nothing remained but the Byzantine tradition qualified by touches of personality in unimportant details, and Sano di Pietro was considered an innovator because he painted round, instead of almond-shaped eyes.

And yet in these pictures, with their flaring gold and ultramarine, their plaster crowns and applied ornaments, there is an unmistakable decorative quality. There are exquisite conventional designs in the halos and orfrays, and in the heads a certain

stiff grace and awkward tenderness which possess undeniable charm, — a charm which appeals even to those who do not believe that a painter's feeling is always in the inverse ratio to his technical ability, and that the absence of knowledge implies the presence of sentiment.

With the dawn of the sixteenth century Pinturicchio, the Umbrian, and Bazzi, the Lombard, came to Siena, and the artists and their patrons awoke to a comprehension of the grand, free art of the Renaissance and "orthodoxy of taste," and golden "Majesties" vanished forever into the limbo of things that were.

## V

And what manner of men were they, the patrons for whom these solemn altar-pieces were painted, for whom Madonna must be glued fast to her throne, and the divine Child stiffly displayed in his jewelled robes like the Sacrament in its monstrance?

What was the theory of life, the moral standard, the ideal of these buyers of gilded triptychs?

These are difficult questions to answer, and complex as were the Sienese, it were easier to define their dominant trait, *i. e.* intensity; their overflowing vitality wreaked itself on so many different forms of effort, the old volcanic fire ran in the veins of sinner and saint, now devouring and destroying, now rising in a pure flame, but glowing alike in ascetic, patriot, and sybarite. Austere as the brown town looked on its bare hill-top, it was famed for delicate living, and the novels of Illicini and Sermini, the poems of Beccadelli and Folgore, depict an artificial and corrupt society given over to pleasure-seeking, — a society which, though elegant and luxurious, lacked the principles of true refinement. It possessed neither moderation, self-control, nor mental poise; under the veneer of courtesy and high-flown senti-

ments, were the untamed instincts, the puerile superstitions of ruder times, ready to break bounds at any moment. The young knight who bore down all the lances in the tourney, and looked a very Saint Michael as he knelt in the cathedral, would burn and slay like a brutal mercenary, and the youth who fasted until he fainted in Lent, and tore his bare shoulders with the scourge, would serenade his neighbor's wife at Easter.

The time not spent in praying and fighting was passed in a joyous fashion; the fingers that could grasp the sword-hilt and count the chaplet, were cunning at the lute strings. Pleasant sinning led naturally to unpleasant repenting. After a season of long prayers and short commons, ginger was hotter than ever in the mouth, and they who had plunged deepest in the emotional excesses of penitence were foremost in brawl or revel. Nor was this surprising. The exercise of certain forms of piety is apt to coexist with worldliness, and religious aspiration is not necessarily associated with moral rectitude. The rigid observance of formulæ was no restriction on impulse or desire, and the Sienese undoubtedly repeated his morning prayer before going out to sack his neighbor's house.

And he was not merely a fighter and a free-liver, he was an exquisite as well. "The Sienese are as vain as the French," wrote Dante in the thirteenth

century, and though he was not distinguished for the impartiality of his opinions, the criticism was just. They loved magnificence in dress; their weakness for millinery left its impress on their art; they bought the rich brocades which sober Florence manufactured but rarely wore, and no doubt were wont to lie awake o' nights "carving the fashion of a new doublet;" the embroiderers and goldsmiths of Siena were famous throughout Italy, and we can still see their work on the celestial dandies and jewelled saints of the picture gallery. They had a pretty taste for dainty trifles, and imported musical instruments from Germany, pearls and perfumes from Venice, and from France ivory caskets and mirror covers, delicately carved. They curled their hair, and shaped their eyebrows like Chaucer's Alison and admired a delicate pallor. Nor were they wanting in mental artifices. When not ferocious, they were courteous; it was indispensable that a lady should be sentimental, and a little languor was considered becoming to a lover.

They were fond of novels; not of the cynical, cruel Florentine tales, but of stories of gentler jests and light loves tinged with dreamy voluptuousness, set in familiar backgrounds of gardens and arras-hung chambers. They had their ethical code too, and agreed "that the three most eminent virtues of a generous nature are courtesy, gratitude, and liber-

ality." They had but a poor opinion of learning; among all those Greek and Latin manuscripts for which their neighbors, the Florentines, were paying such prices, there was not a single treatise on hawking or dog breaking. The minute and laborious scholarship of the time had as few charms for the devotee, as for the ruffling gallant who was as intellectually apathetic as he was physically active. The learned churchman was a *rara avis* in Siena until the day of Æneas Sylvius. Why study with the philosophers when one could dream with the mystic? Why plod with the humanist when one could rise heavenward on the wings of ecstasy with the saint?

They were not unaccomplished, however. They could improvise poetry of a thin impressionist quality; write stories, not well, but in an unprofessional, fashionable manner; they played and sang "like people of quality;" they could dispute or rather argue, as we say now-a-days (though perhaps the older term was the truer one), principally on questions of sentiment, and sometimes even convince a lady that reputation was an excellent substitute for honesty. Pious observances and a fantastic code of honor did not prevent people from enjoying themselves; on the contrary, these restraints lent piquancy to much that a more liberal age has robbed of savor.

For a pictorial presentation of Sienese social life,

we can turn to a poet of the thirteenth century, Folgore da San Gimignano, who, though a native of the little burg which still wears a civic crown of mediæval towers, was a true son of luxurious Siena.

In a series of twelve sonnets addressed to a gay company of Sienese gentlemen, he described with the minuteness characteristic of his age, the pastimes and occupations of the nobles. Each of these sonnets, named after the months of the year, highly finished as the miniatures of a missal-border, is a brilliant and animated picture of contemporary life.

In them the joyous company, the "*godereccia, spendereccia, brigata*" of Dante rides past us, a gay procession so vividly depicted that we seem to see the patternings of the embroidered surcoats, and touch the garlands of spring flowers, and hear the jingling of harness and a sound of psalteries as the cavalcade canters by in the easy swing of the sonnet.

All travellers have learned, sometimes to their cost, how often it is *festa* in Italy, and the holidays were twice as numerous in the old times when whole weeks were devoted to merry-making. After the privations and suffering of a campaign or a siege, the good things of life were enjoyed with a keener zest; the very uncertainty of human existence caused men to live in the present and eagerly snatch at each passing joy, and never were earthly

delights more appreciated than by those who at any moment might be obliged to renounce them forever.

The great Italian nobles kept open house, *corti bandite*, at Christmas, Pentecost, Easter, mid-summer, harvest-time, and all through the month of May. To these festivals came not only belted knights with their squires and varlets, their horses, hawks, and hounds, but noble ladies with their pages and bower-maidens; and every one who could sing a song or tell a story, poet and musician, buffoon and juggler, found a warm welcome, free quarters, and generous largesse.

It was the busy idleness of these "house-parties" which Folgore described in his year of sonnets. For these past-masters in the art of delicate living, every season had its special diversion, every day its pleasure-party, every evening its revel. In January the "joyous companions" were installed in comfortable chambers, warmed by roaring fires, and lighted by many torches, where they shook the dice or leaned over the chess-board; while for exercise they snowballed the girls whom they met in their walks. February found them hunting boar and wild goat, returning at night to mulled wine and part-songs before the kitchen fire. In March the fishing season began; the painted boats skimmed over the lakes, and the larger craft were made ready for rough

weather; eels, lampreys, and sturgeon were caught, and no priests nor friars were invited to eat them. With April the scene shifted, for the Tuscan spring had come, not coyly and timidly as though loath to leave the lap of winter, but royally, like a sovereign taking possession of the land. On the fine grass of the pleasaunce the Provençal dance was formed; the ladies sauntered through the flowery ways of blossoming orchards, or cantered on Spanish jennets between budding hedges; the air was filled with the throbbing of the lute and the sound of young men's voices, while serenades sung the spring nights to sleep. May was a festal month when the girls went a-maying and youths met in the tourney. The sonnet is as crowded as a wall-panel of Pinturicchio with detail and color, and is filled with the stir of the joust. The polished shields and shining helms glistened in the southern sunshine; the lists were gay with brilliant housings and mantles and pennants; there was shivering of lances, splitting of shields, and the armed breasts and foreheads of the horses clashed together. Down from balcony and casement, where the girls leaned out, came a shower of garlands; a flight of golden oranges was tossed up to the assailants, and then there followed much discourse of love, punctuated with kisses on cheek and mouth.

In June the gay folk retired to a small town

perched on a wooded hill, — a fantastic town like those we see in Pinturicchio's frescoes of the Library, gleaming white among thick-leaved trees, a town watered by many fountains, where the lawns were threaded by streamlets, and the pleasant ways were all embowered with trees, orange, palm, and lemon. In this true believer's paradise, the time was passed in mutual courtesies, for here was Love lord paramount. (*Le gente vi sian tutte amorose.*) July was spent in Siena, cooled by the mountain breezes and protected against the heat by the thick walls of the palaces, and August was passed in the mountains. In September the shooting season opened. The goshawk shook its jesses, and the falcon rose into the still air; wild fowl were shot and snared; the bowstrings twanged, the dogs strained at their leashes, and the hunters made jests that were ancient in Dante's day. The sonnet is a vividly realized bit of mediæval *venerie*, and still faintly echoes the sound of the horn and the thin tinkle of the falcon's bells. In October there was visiting, hunting, and shooting, dancing in the long autumn evenings, and over-much drinking of wine new and old. Rainy November sent them to the baths of Petriola, and the last sonnet of the series ends the year with more junketing and a bit of heartless advice.

Of the beliefs and doubts that were troubling

men's minds, of the great causes that were at work in the thirteenth century, this singer of fashionable frolics and mediæval finery gives us no hint. He is blind and deaf to the new ideas, the soul-stirring enthusiasms which filled the intellectual atmosphere and manifested themselves in Protean forms; which burst into song in Dante, ripened into scientific inquiry in Frederick II., and made wise laws and planned mad crusades in Saint Louis.

Of the noble ideals, of the divine yearning which inspired the "Imitatione," of the love that with Beatrice's poet became religion, of the religion that with Saint Francis became love, there is no sign in Folgore's sonnets. He is no full-throated nightingale to celebrate such themes, but only a little grasshopper drunk with honey dew, chirping shrilly of clear skies and plenteous harvests. But his epicureanism never degenerates into coarseness, and although he is too fond of wine-bibbing and good cheer, he is a true Italian in his intense susceptibility to beauty in all its forms. It is interesting to note in this forerunner of the Renaissance the survival of the indomitable joyousness of antiquity which had endured through all the storms that swept over Italy. A passionate appreciation of the delight of the eye and of the pride of life is as strong in Folgore as it was in Ovid, as it continued to be in Claudian.

And yet the descendants of these sybarites, pleasure seekers themselves, set an example of heroism to Europe; this luxurious folk, exquisitely susceptible to pain, starved to death by thousands rather than sacrifice its civic liberty. It was of these coquettish, squeamish ladies that Monluc wrote, "I would rather undertake to defend Siena with her women than Rome with her men." And if we would learn what human beings can endure for a beloved cause we must read the story of the siege of Siena. It is not a pleasant story; indeed it would be an intolerable one were it not that the chronicle of cruelty and wrong is also a record of supreme self-sacrifice, of torture and agonizing death bravely borne for the sake of an ideal. A natural shrinking from painful and repulsive images would prevent us from opening these hideous pages in the city's archives were it not for the glory as well as the anguish of the civic martyrdom which they reveal

## VI

It is difficult to understand this last scene in Siena's civic tragedy without a glance at the events which preceded it. By the middle of the sixteenth century the long struggle of Frenchman and Spaniard for supremacy in the peninsula had ended. Since the victory of Pavia, Charles V. had won every move, and the French king, remembering the prison of Madrid, played his losing game half-heartedly and by proxy. The emperor, with a ferocious, unpaid army at his back, was the true master of the situation. Since his alliance with Pope Clement VII. and his coronation at Bologna (1530), Italy, terrorized by foreign troops and stunned by repeated sacks and massacres, had sunk into political bondage under a foreign monarchy and intellectual thraldom under an elective priesthood. Tyranny, temporal and spiritual, had made a desolation and called it peace. Venice, the only strong Italian power, had been weakened and dismembered by the Holy Father's League of Cambrai; Cosimo de' Medici, richest and most powerful of Italian potentates, newmade duke of rebellious Florence, was a moneyed lackey who paid for the privilege of imperial

service, and the rest of the states of Italy were nominally governed by puppets moved by the emperor.

Siena, who had followed her old Ghibelline policy and prostrated herself before Charles V., fared no better than the other Italian towns.

In 1551 she had been for twenty-one years under the yoke of the emperor, who had ruled, or rather oppressed, the city by a patrician *Balia* backed by a Spanish garrison. Again and again the burghers, after sending complaints and embassies to the emperor, had risen against these petty despots, and as often Cosimo de' Medici had terrified them into submission again. Finally the erection of a citadel by imperial order, to cow the city gave the death-blow to Sienese Ghibellinism, and in despair the old republic signed a treaty with Henry II. of France.

In 1551 war broke out in Italy between the French king and Charles V. Hostilities had just begun when two illustrious Sienese exiles, Piccolomini and Amerighi, at the head of three thousand insurgents, appeared before the gates of Siena. The brown ramparts were crowded with the burghers who had braved the lance-blows of the Spanish guards to welcome their countrymen. The leaders, riding close under the walls, heedless of the Spanish fire, called on them to rise against their tyrants

in the name of France and of liberty. Invoked by these mighty names (potent to conjure with in many an age and country) the quenchless spirit of the old republic awoke again; the people rose as one man and, unarmed as they were, stormed the gates, which they opened to their countrymen. Gathering force at every step, the wave of revolt swept into the great market-place, driving the Spanish soldiers before it, rushed through the narrow streets, and surged around the gaunt Dominican convent above Fonte Branda, where the foreign troops were quartered. After much hard fighting the Spaniards gave way and retreated in good order to the citadel, and the Sienese were their own masters once more (1552).

Rejoicings had not ceased when Louis de Lansac, French ambassador at Rome, arrived in Siena accompanied by Cardinal Farnese and Niccolò Orsini. To them the Spaniards, too proud to yield to mere Italian burgesses, capitulated, and evacuated the town (August, 1552), leaving the citadel to be destroyed. Then occurred one of those dramatic episodes in which the history of the commonwealth was so rich. As we read, the heroic figures detach themselves from the yellowed pages and pass before us in solemn procession. For to these passionate patriots this demolition did not mean only the destruction of a foreign stronghold, — it was the

renunciation of a national ideal, of the emperor whom Siena had loved and served for centuries. Therefore this significant act was accomplished with due ceremony. The captain of the people, the magistrates and clergy, the nobles and burghers, crowned with olive, marched under the national standard to the citadel, and after a formal delivery of the keys the trumpets sounded the charge; from every church tower rolled the answering thunder of the bells; the knights unbuckled their corselets, the monks tucked up their gowns, the magistrates stripped off their stately *lucchi*, seized pick and shovel, and with deafening shouts of "France" and "Liberty," which silenced the trumpets and made the bells swing soundless in their towers, the demolition began. "In one hour, more of the fortress on the side of the city was destroyed than could have been rebuilt in four months." In such joyous fashion ended the first procession of the siege of Siena. There were two more such "progresses" later, less triumphal, perhaps, but more glorious.

For a time the palmy days of the old republic seemed to have returned. Charles V.'s armies failed to take Montalcino; Cosimo, always on the winning side, signed a treaty with Siena in which he promised to remain neutral, and the Duc de Tormes arrived with troops and military stores from France. The emperor, angry with Cosimo and irritated by

his own failure before Metz, sent a curt order to disband the troops, "as the Duke of Florence was determined to leave the French in Siena."

But the Duke of Florence wanted neither Frenchmen nor Spaniards in the city he coveted. A true Medici, traitor to the heart's core, hoping for the jackal's reward when the lion was glutted, he had been playing a double game; Charles V.'s resentment and the arrival of Piero Strozzi as lieutenant of the King of France in Siena forced him to make his first real move.

Piero Strozzi's father had been treacherously murdered by Cosimo, Piero's own fortune had been confiscated, and a price had been set upon his head. "For revenge he was willing to move heaven and earth, and even hell itself." Rich, high in the favor of the Queen of France, Cosimo's own cousin; an able general fresh from the victory of Metz; respected and admired in Florence, he was a formidable adversary to be met at once.

While reassuring the Sienese, Cosimo secretly pledged himself to Charles V. to drive the French from Siena with the help of the emperor's German and Spanish troops. In concert with the Marquis of Marignano he planned to enter the Maremma and the Val-di-Chiana and to capture the fort outside the Camollia gate simultaneously. The first two enterprises failed, but Marignano took the Palazzo

del Diavolo and the fortress (1554), as the Sienese, completely duped by Cosimo, were quite unprepared for resistance. Piero Strozzi, who had been fortifying in the Maremma, hurried back, and the Camollia gate was strengthened with incredible rapidity by the united labor of men, women, and children.

The Sienese ladies turned this toil into a pageant, to the great admiration of a certain French gentleman, who fortunately has left a detailed account of the whole affair. This "Vicomte de Bourdeille, Abbé de Brantosme et d'André," then serving in Siena, who was as good a judge of a gown as of a stockade, and knew the points of a fine woman as well as the range of his own arquebuse, saw "on Saint Anthony's day in the month of January three bands of Amazons appear at the Campo." Each band was a thousand strong (*toutes belles, vertueuses et honnestes dames*), with its own banner, colors, device, and noble leader; all were magnificently habited in violet, crimson, and white *à la Nymphale*, the long cotes caught up to show the steel greaves; the helmets crushing the curls beneath them in a charming travesty of the grim men-at-arms. Each lady carried a fascine on her shoulder, "and all resolute to live or die for liberty," they marched to the fort which was rising, course on course, under the enemy's guns and

fell to work with a will; the whole city followed them, and the walls rose as if by enchantment. When the sun sank they re-formed in the Campo and, ranged in battle order, sang a hymn to Siena's sovereign Lady; then, after they had every one knelt a moment before that smiling Madonna which Bazzi set against the rough wall of the old palace and received the cardinal's blessing, "each one went to his home resolved to do better in the future."

Meanwhile, in spite of hymns and blessings and Amazons, Marignano, Cosimo's general, had completely blockaded the town, and Cosimo, throwing off the mask, had sent twenty-five thousand men into the field, had set a price of ten thousand ducats on Strozzi's head, and declared his intention of putting every Florentine taken in arms to death.

The war soon began to assume a ferocious character owing to the inhuman orders sent from Florence and executed to the letter by Marignano. Strozzi, against his will, was obliged to make reprisals. One of them is characteristic: a popular preacher was employed by the Sienese to pour oil on the flame of hatred by reviling Cosimo in his sermons.

By March (1554) the country around the town had become an arid desert; villa and farmhouse, orchard and cornfield, had disappeared; every mill and aqueduct had been destroyed, and the Sienese, penned in the city, had to look on hopelessly while

the brave peasants who attempted to supply them with food were tortured and hung by Marignano's Spanish and German soldiers. Obsolete cruelties were practised, and the episodes of the siege recall the military atrocities of the fourteenth century. But the perpetrators of these archaic barbarities, the imperial veterans who had learned their hideous lessons too well in the sacks of Rome and of Prato, were met by spirits as fierce and resolute as their own.

The desperate resistance which they encountered everywhere culminated in that of the old peasant woman who, after the capture of Turrita by Marignano, persisted in shrieking "Lupa! Lupa!" (the war-cry of Siena), instead of "Duca!" (that of Florence). Blows and kicks and sword-cuts could not silence her; half-mad with insults and tortures, she would not desist, and when the soldiers, infuriated by the resistance of so weak a thing, stripped, gagged, and crucified her, nailing her like a hawk to the city gate, every muscle of the agonized face which glared between the wefts of her white hair showed that she was still struggling to scream "Lupa! Lupa!" to her tormentors. Indeed, it seemed as if the spirit of the Roman wolf on their standard had inspired the Sienese; as Marignano, egged on by Cosimo, safe in the fortress-like palace of Florence, increased his cruelties, the Sienese redoubled their heroism. The

inhabitants of the castelli, or walled towns, were threatened with death if they resisted after the first discharge of the besieger's artillery, but each tiny burg, its walls manned by half a dozen combatants, dared to withstand Cosimo's veterans. The citadel of Asinalunga was defended by a Roman captain, aided by four cross-bowmen and as many peasants, against the best troops of Germany and Spain. He was summoned and offered good terms, which he refused. When finally forced to surrender, he was brought to the Florentine general, De' Nobili, a nephew of Julius III., who asked him what had induced him to attempt a defence against an army. His answer was worthy of record: "I remembered the brave deeds of the Romans, and being a Roman, with arms in my hand, I wished to fight as became a Roman." This calm reply sent the general into a rage: "And like a Roman thou shalt die!" he yelled, cutting the prisoner over the head with his sword. The soldiers finished the sorry work, and in a few moments all that was left of him who had remembered the Romans was thrown into the moat to fatten the glutted crows, — the only living things which were full-fed during the siege of Siena.

Although a pope's nephew generally fell below the ethical standard of his age, this was a typical instance of Cosimo's military methods and what scant mercy the Sienese had to expect from his lieutenants.

The history of this political war forms a melancholy commentary on the brilliant civilization of the Renaissance; in an age of royal knights and fashionable chivalry, of pious observances and religious reformation, of courtly manners and exquisite refinement, the commonest notion of fair play and the admiration which courage, even in an opponent, commands were conspicuously absent; as for the milder virtues of compassion for the conquered, or pity for the sufferings of the enemy, if they existed at all, they had no appreciable effect on human action. Worst of all, these atrocities were ineffectual; they did not strike terror, and in each captured town a new tragedy was enacted.

Meanwhile, the besieged were bearing their privations gallantly with that smiling fortitude which is the Latin substitute for our sterner-lipped Northern endurance. Provisions were scarce and dear, but the poor were fed at the doors of the great houses. Private fortunes were sacrificed to public necessities. Games were celebrated, holidays kept, and if hunger pinched, the jewelled girdles were drawn closer, and the lips and cheeks that paled with fasting were touched with those tiny red balls brought from the Levant for Beauty's use in happier times, a patriotic coquetry which Saint Bernardino himself would have forgiven. And then there was daily comfort for high hearts, if not for empty stomachs, in the diurnal

visit to the ramparts to jeer at Marignano's unsuccessful efforts to change the siege into an assault; and individual patriotism was much stimulated by this direct personal contact with the enemy, — an enemy who was not a vague, dark mass under a cloud of smoke several miles away, but a real, visible opponent, whose cross-bow twanged in the ear, whose scaling-ladder rasped the stones at one's elbow; so near that one could count the rivets in his armor, could see the blood gush from his wounds, could hear his taunts and answer them with curses. As artillery was still undeveloped and man was yet a creature of primitive impulses, the rage of battle, the *gaudium certaminis*, was still his.

News good and bad broke through Marignano's lines to the besieged; money came as well over the harried country from Paris, Lyons, Venice, and Ancona, where banished patriots and generous sympathizers had brought their gold or copper to the market-place for the cause of Italian freedom, and the rich Florentine exiles, Altoviti, Medici, and Soderini, undeterred by the certain confiscation of their property by Cosimo, gave their purses and their swords to the Sienese.

But the promised aid from France was slow in coming. Montmorenci, always opposed to the Italian war, was at the king's ear, and suspense had become apprehension when a panting and dusty peasant

brought tidings of a French squadron at Port' Ercole with three thousand Grisons on board.

Cheered by the news, Piero Strozzi made a bold move on Pontedera, by which he hoped to call Marignano away from Siena, and by joining the Grisons and another French army from Mirandola to carry the war into Florentine territory. As the French did not join him the manœuvre partially failed, but Siena had a respite of two weeks, and Strozzi revictualled his army from the French fleet in the Maremma before he returned to Siena with its new French governor, Monluc.

Blaise de Monluc has told the story of the siege and his part in it in "Commentaries" which might have been written with the point of his own sword; in these sharp, trenchant sentences, so different from the ample, flowing periods of Brantôme, the death agony of the republic is told with a soldier's simplicity. The man as he reveals himself in his work was a typical Frenchman of the sixteenth century, sagacious, honest, loyal, and cruel. A *preux chevalier* at Siena, a ferocious bigot in France, his name, which shines in Italian annals, is written in fire and blood in the history of Protestantism.

While Siena was left under the care of this ruthless persecutor of Huguenots, Marignano after a sharp skirmish in which he was much distressed had decamped, followed by Strozzi. Strozzi's campaigns

belong to the history of Italy; only their results can be considered here, and their effect on the besieged. On August 3 (1554), terrible news came to Siena: a great battle had been fought the day before (August 2) at Marciano; Strozzi had been defeated, had lost twelve thousand soldiers, and with a broken remnant of his cavalry had fled to Montalcino. A few days later this report was verified by the reappearance of Marignano and the renewal of the blockade.

And now Siena began to starve in earnest: the population of the town sank from thirty thousand to ten thousand souls, and fifty thousand peasants perished during this siege of fifteen months. Can any description of individual suffering equal the eloquence of these figures? "At the close of the war few of the old inhabitants remained," wrote Adriani, and the fertile Maremma became a fever-haunted waste. Cosimo had decreed pain of death against any one who should bring or send provisions to the starving city, but the heroic peasants daily brought their scanty stores of oil and corn to relieve her; they were killed by hundreds, hung at the doors of their blackened cottages, spitted on the roofs of the rifled granges, or, worst fate of all, reserved for those floating hells of stripes and chains and galls, the Grand Duke's galleys. For the beloved city no sacrifice was too great, no torment unendurable;

undeterred by death or mutilation they served her, and when the town starved, it was because the peasants themselves were dead of hunger. In "redeemed" Italy, where monuments are rising fast to commemorate her heroes, no one celebrates these nameless martyrs, no statue or tablet tells the story of those who, famishing themselves, died to feed the hungry.

Meanwhile, so high couraged were the burghers, that though famine — not scarcity nor privation, but actual famine — was in their streets, there was no question of capitulation; encouraged by Monluc, by the French victories in Piedmont, and by the unfortunate but indomitable Piero Strozzi, the Sienese still hoped and endured. "As God lives, not one man young or old stayed at home, all took arms resolute to eat their children before they would yield," wrote Monluc.

Again and again one of these starved soldiers would fall lifeless out of the ranks or a sentry would faint at his post, and daughter or sister would put on his armor and keep his watch on the bastion. Shadows that once were men plucked up the grass between the cracks in the pavements and ate it; gnawed at the raw hides in the tanners' quarter like famished curs, and maddened with hunger invaded the churches, tore down and devoured the great altar candles, drank the oil from the lamps

which hung before the shrines of the impassive saints, those saints so deaf to prayers, so blind to anguish.

It was not until they had grown wolfish from the famine-pinch that the Sienese resolved on that terrible sacrifice which in earlier days had so often been made by the old commonwealths, the ejection of the useless mouths.

*Le bocche inutili* were those who exhausted the supplies and rendered no military service, who ate and could not fight; the beggars who in prosperous times haunted the church doors and the monastery gates, and by receiving their charities helped rich folk to gain heaven; the artisans of the poorer sort and their families; the old and infirm poor; the cripples and the physically afflicted; the peddlers; the street singers, all those who gained a precarious livelihood from day to day. These poor, emaciated wretches were to be thrust out of the gates to die between the walls and the enemy's camp.

Perhaps nothing in history is a plainer proof of the immense difference which existed between the man of the Renaissance and ourselves than the fact that such a measure was passed and executed by good citizens, and was considered by them to be not only justifiable, but meritorious, a sacrifice on the altar of civic liberty. But the sight which followed it must have wrung the stoutest heart. To describe

it adequately one would need the soul and the pen of Dante's self.

These unfortunate creatures had lived in suspense ever since the beginning of the scarcity. Hoping to be forgotten, they had hidden themselves in holes and corners until famine had forced them into the streets again, where they starved publicly in hourly apprehension of their fate. The order was not executed without resistance, such resistance as age and fear and weakness could make when driven to despair. The phantoms struggled with the soldiers; the cripples struck feebly at the lances with their crutches; the women, many of them with skeleton babies in their lean arms, fought like wild-cats, biting, scratching, and clinging with bleeding nails to the house-walls, the doors, even to the stones of the streets; some of the older folk wrapping their rags around them lay stubbornly down on the pavement and were crushed or beaten to death by the men-at-arms; some clung about the soldiers' knees and were kicked along by the iron sollerets; others tried to escape and were hunted back again; many fell from weakness and were dragged along bruised and bleeding; the stronger craftsmen, rolling their tatters about their lank arms, tried to fend off the sword-strokes; one or two stupefied by terror walked on straight before them, staring with unseeing eyes and groaning aloud; while others besought the mercy

of every passer-by, or begged for a few minutes' grace to say a prayer before a shrine. From all this wretchedness an awful clamor rose: shrieks for pity; curses in voices faint with hunger or hoarse with fear; blasphemies of all that man holds holy; prayers to every saint in heaven; screams of pain; heart-shaking sobs; the dull thud of lance-blows on meagre shoulders; yells inarticulate and inhuman like the cries of tortured animals, and now and again the loud mocking laugh of some miserable creature crazed with fright.

Finally, in spite of their impotent resistance, the work was done. When the last clutching, shrieking wretch had been thrust through the postern and the gate closed, came the turn of Marignano's soldiers. Though there was no plunder to be had, yet for men who had been diverted with *autos da fé* and Indian-hunts there was sport left in this poor flesh which could still suffer; the stronger men were tortured by past-masters in the art of torment until they had told all that passed in the city and were then hung; the weaker and less fortunate were driven from town to camp, from camp to town, hunted down by the Spaniards and Sienese alike, and tossed to and fro like scum on the waves until they perished in the filth of the moat.

While Siena was afflicted with this "horrid spectacle for humanity," as Galluzzi writing in milder

times termed it, there came a message from Cosimo, the *impresario* of such spectacles. He assured the government that he did not war against the liberties of the Sienese, but only required them to place themselves under the emperor's protection. Charles V. had declared Siena forfeited by rebellion to the imperial crown, and Cosimo offered himself as mediator between the republic and the emperor. Henry II. had given Siena permission to treat, but it was not until March (1555), when all hope was dead and when not one blade of grass remained uneaten in the streets, that the intrepid city yielded; the first ambassadors sent to Cosimo were still so high-hearted that they proposed their impossible conditions as boldly as though Siena were victualled for a twelvemonth, and were sent back by Cosimo. A fortnight later eight others appeared in Florence, and on the second of April the treaty, or rather the death-warrant of the republic, was signed. The terms sounded well: Siena was to remain free, but the emperor would appoint twenty of the governing *Balia* and a garrison would be admitted; no citadel was to be built without the consent of the people; the forts thrown up by Marignano around Siena should be demolished; a general amnesty (except for rebels) proclaimed; the inhabitants could emigrate or remain in the city as they chose, and the French should be allowed to retire with flying colors.

On the twenty-first of April (1555) the last procession of the siege was formed. On the harried space around the walls, not long ago a smiling paradise of villas and gardens and thrifty farms and orchards, Marignano's army was stationed to witness the evacuation of Siena. Two rows of veterans in complete armor were drawn up in double ranks outside the Roman gate at which for nearly two years they had battered in vain. In dead silence the herse fell, and through the lane of steel marched six Gascon battalions and four Italian columns, with Monluc at their head. Mere tattered spectres they were, their clothes in rags, their ranks sadly thinned, but their arms were bright and the unconquered white banner floated over the heads which were still held high. Behind them came the self-exiled Sienese who had learned from the fate of Florence how a Medici kept faith with misfortune. Two hundred and fifty noble houses and three hundred and forty-five plebeian families preferring exile to slavery, cast in their fortunes with the French and went with the troops to Montalcino.

"I had seen," wrote Monluc, "a lamentable spectacle when the useless mouths were ejected from the city; but I beheld more than equal misery in the departure of those unhappy ones who left Siena with us and in those who remained. Never in my life did I behold so painful a parting, and though

our soldiers had suffered every hardship, still this separation afflicted them, and the more because they were unable to preserve the public liberty. As for me I suffered more; I could not see this calamity without tears, and sorrowing deeply for this people which had shown itself so ardent in the preservation of its freedom."

This is the testimony of a connoisseur in misery, and in truth it must have been a sorrowful sight which moved even the pitiless to pity, for, touched by the aspect of this homeless and friendless folk, the Spanish soldiers brought their own bread and distributed it to them as they passed, and Marignano gave Monluc a scanty supply of provisions. But these succors came too late, and the route across a country so wasted that "from Montalcino to Siena, from Siena to Florence, not a living spirit moved upon the face of the land," was marked by the bones of those who fell and died of hunger. And with those patriots who could not bear to see the enslavement of their country the spirit of civic liberty departed from Siena.

## VII

That admirers of minute designs and florid detail could appreciate grandeur as well, no one can doubt who has seen the plans of the Sienese cathedral. Its history is one of a grand result, and of far grander, though thwarted endeavor, and it is hard to realize to-day that the church as it stands is but a fragment, the transept only, of what Siena willed. From the state of the existing works no one can doubt that the brave little republic would have finished it had she not met an enemy before whom the sword of Monteaperto was useless. The plague of 1348 stalked across Tuscany, and the chill of thirty thousand Sienese graves numbed the hand of master and workmen; sweeping away the architect who planned, the masons who built, the magistrates who ordered, it left but the yellowed parchment in the *Archivio* which conferred upon Maestro Lorenzo Maitani the superintendence of the works.

The façade of the present church is amazing in its richness, undoubtedly possesses some grand and much lovely detail, and is as undoubtedly suggestive, with its white marble ornaments upon a pink marble ground, of a huge, sugared cake. It is im-

possible to look at this restored whiteness with the sun upon it; the dazzled eyes close involuntarily and one sees in retrospect the great, gray church front at Rheims, or the solemn façade of Notre Dame de Paris. It is like remembering an organ burst of Handel after hearing the florid roulades of the mass within the cathedral.

The interior is rich in color and fine in effect, but the Northerner is painfully impressed by the black and white horizontal stripes which, running from vaulting to pavement, seem to blur and confuse the vision, and the closely set bars of the piers are positively irritating. In the hexagonal lantern, however, they are less offensive than elsewhere, because the fan-like radiation of the bars above the great gilded statues breaks up the horizontal effect. The decoration of the stone-work is not happy; the use of cold red and cold blue with gilt bosses in relief does much to vulgarize, and there is constant sally in small masses which belittles the general effect. It is evident that the Sienese tendency to floridity is answerable for much of this, and that having added some piece of big and bad decoration, the cornice of papal heads, for instance, they felt forced to do away with it or continue it throughout.

But this fault and many others are forgotten when we examine the detail with which later men have filled the church. Other Italian cathedrals pos-

sess art-objects of a higher order; perhaps no other one is so rich in these treasures. The great masters are disappointing here. Raphael, as the co-laborer of Pinturicchio, is dainty, rather than great, and Michelangelo passes unnoticed in the huge and coldly elaborate altar-front of the Piccolomini. But Marrina, with his doors of the library; Barili, with his marvellous casing of the choir-stalls; Beccafumi, with his bronze and *niello*, — these are the artists whom one wonders at; these wood-carvers and bronze-founders, creators of the microcosmic detail of the Renaissance which had at last burst triumphantly into Siena. This treasure is cumulative, as we walk eastward from the main door, where the pillars are a maze of scroll-work in deepest cutting, and by the time we reach the choir the head fairly swims with the play of light and color. We wander from point to point, we finger and caress the lustrous stalls of Barili, and turn with a kind of confusion of vision from panel to panel; above our heads the tabernacle of Vecchietta, the lamp-bearing angels of Beccafumi, make spots of bituminous color, with glittering high-lights, strangely emphasizing their modelling; from these youths, who might be pages to some Roman prefect, the eye travels upward still farther, along the golden convolutions of the heavily stuccoed pilasters to the huge, gilded cherubs' heads that frame the eastern rose.

Beneath the feet is labyrinth, that pictured pavement which, so bad in principle, is yet so splendid in reality. It is useless to theorize about its inappropriate ornament; we follow its mazes, every one of us, with that clue of Ariadne, the instinctive and natural delight in form wedded to story which is in us all, from the gaping peasant of Valdichiana to Dante studying the pavement of Purgatory, and Godfrey forgetting crown and crusade when once the pictured poems of the windows and the walls had met his eyes.

One cannot sufficiently praise the beauty of this *niello* work, which, wrought by Federighi and Beccafumi, and worn by the feet of three centuries, has been ably restored by Maccari and Franchi. Here we found the old block-pictures of earliest printed books, enlarged a thousand-fold, stretching from pillar to pillar in their black and white marble. Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence in their *tondi*, austerely decorative in their simple lines; divided battle-pieces, where the knights had pillaged half their armor from the tents of Scipio, and half from the camp of Fornovo; sieges where antique profiles looked from the mediæval sallets; decorative, thick-leaved trees; veritable tapestries in stone, with dangling Absalom or conquering David; the seven ages of man; all framed by lovely conventional borders and friezes, medallions and patternings, one more pleasing than the other.

And, as if this were not enough, suddenly, at the intersection of nave and transept, the glorious pulpit of Niccolà Pisano rises before one, a nude antique athlete among these mediæval princes.

On the left is the Piccolomini Library with its gorgeous antiphonals and its frescoes. As we enter the sculptured doors, it seems as though we had opened a huge missal, and that the gold and ultramarine, the flat landscape, the ill-drawn but richly costumed figures, and the floriated borders of one of the great choir-books which line the room, had, in some mysterious way, been transferred to its walls.

It is incredible that these frescoes are four hundred years old. Surely Pinturicchio came down from his scaffoldings but yesterday. This is how the hardly dried plaster must have looked to pope and cardinals and princes when the boards were removed, and when the very figures on these walls — smart youths in tights and slashes, bright-robed scholars, ecclesiastics caped in ermine, ladies with long braids bound in nets of silk, crowded to see themselves embalmed in *tempera* for curious after-centuries to gaze upon.

The first four panels are the most charming; they are a little hard, a little spotty, a little vulgarized by the applied ornaments of gilded plaster in high relief, and yet what charm there is in the pensive,

young faces, in the strange piled-up backgrounds, and what variety and elegance in the costumes.

The subject is a moral tale of the Renaissance: how a good little boy, by minding his book and obeying his pastors and masters, became a great scholar, a cardinal, and finally a pope. And to those who know the life of this saintly humanist, who was also a passionate lover of beauty and the literary forerunner of Théophile Gautier and Taine, it is pleasant to find this idyllic memorial of him in his native town. The whole Library, too, is interesting as an example of homogeneous decoration; the wainscoting is enriched with the antiphonals, the vaultings shine with the grotesques of John of Udine; at one end of the room are the Piccolomini shields all a-row under the red hats, while just above the doorway Quercia has placed his muscular, nude Adam and Eve, whom the angel is very properly ejecting from the presence of all these finely dressed folk, and whom we find again on Fonte Gaia, where they are more at home.

## VIII

As a homogeneous and characteristic decoration important in its extent and absolutely representative of its time, Pinturicchio's series of subjects upon the walls and ceiling of the Libreria ranks among the most notable in Italy. The first impression derived from it is that of its freshness, its remarkable preservation ; the second is that of its gayety, its richness, its ever fertile, tireless fancy ; the third is that of its completeness, its homogeneity. These last two impressions are altogether favorable, but the critic in asking himself with some surprise how the first impression of phenomenal preservation has obtained soon realizes that it is the result of the sacrifice of certain distinctly artistic qualities. Such wonderful preservation, although immensely effective, does not necessarily infer in this effectiveness the presence of those qualities which in a *frescante* may be accounted as even technically the highest. The liberal retouching *a secco*, that is to say, the repainting (by Pinturicchio) with dry color after the first true fresco had been absorbed by the plaster, has given to the work an astonishing brightness and an occasional regilding of the parts originally touched

with gold, has added to this brightness, until some of these figures appear to have been painted only yesterday. But it must be understood that for the sake of this brightness Pinturicchio sacrificed transparency and harmony. The *a secco* retouching produces an opacity of color wherever it is used; in a word, the painter has sacrificed true richness of color to that factitious richness which is only brilliancy of surface. The impression afforded by the Sienese Library, which is genuine and abiding, is that of decorative completeness, of homogeneousness, and of a certain splendid gayety.

The secular impression is, above all, surprising, as one passes through the doorway which opens directly from the cathedral into the Library. The Duomo of Siena, in spite of its nobility and beauty, is too sumptuous, too much of a museum, to be accounted among the most solemn of shrines; but it is solemn indeed if compared with its neighbor, the Library, which stands at its side, and indeed almost within it, like a pretty acolyte at the elbow of some gorgeously robed archbishop. Here the Renaissance has full play in the carved pilasters, in the scroll-work of the vaulting, and even in the stained glass, and here M. Müntz, in criticising Pinturicchio, may justifiably use his clever quotation of the tombal inscription to the child who had danced for the Romans twelve hundred years before, "*saltavit et*

*placuit.*" But the painter, though no stylist, is a true decorator in the abundance of his cheerful motives, in his choice of entertaining material, and the realization of a most picturesque effect; by right of all this, *placuit* truly, but by right of it also, he pleases still, and will always please. He is no dramatist, but he is a delightful story-teller, and, like the mediæval singers of interminable romance, he rambles far afield, and often loses the thread of his narrative in a labyrinth of episodes. But as the eye wanders with a certain pleased curiosity from a jewelled caparison to a quaintly slashed jerkin; from a youthful, wistful face to a white castellated town half hidden in sombre verdure, we pardon this wealth of detail. The lovely adolescents, with their vague, wide-eyed glance and their dreamy, distant smile; the sumptuous yet exquisite costumes; above all, the sense of inexhaustible, facile invention, blind us at first to the defects in the drawing, and to the isolation of the painted personages who, each one of them, seems to be leading a separate existence of his own, and has little or no relation to the other figures in the same composition.

And not only the figures, but the groups also, are isolated from each other, making a sort of open-work pattern agreeable in general lines, nevertheless too thin and lace-like to adequately represent such dignified and balanced arrangement as the subjects

required: stately subjects, — royal marriages, processions, councils. Many masters of the fifteenth century cannot avoid confusion in their large compositions, but their masses, if awkwardly composed, usually continue to be masses. Pinturicchio's groups break up into little knots of people who stand in somewhat papery silhouette against the background, and in artists' phrase, his composition is often full of holes. As for his draughtsmanship, he could draw on occasion excellently, — witness the faces in his fresco of the Sistine Chapel; but he did not often rise to such occasion; perhaps because he was too hurried, or perhaps because he did not care. At all events, whether hurried or indifferent, he was exceptionally canny in his relations with his patrons. He knew the influence of bright gold upon both the clerical and the laic imagination, the effect of the glitter of a gilded surface in relief. "Ghirlandajo," says Vasari, "did away in a great measure with those flourishes and scrolls formed with gypsum on bole and gold, which were better suited to the decoration of tapestry or hangings than to the paintings of good masters."

If Pinturicchio had heard this criticism, he would have smiled, ordered more gold and ultramarine, and set his apprentices to kneading more gypsum. He frankly substituted this material richness for hard thinking, and, instead of giving careful drawing to his figures, he was satisfied with that valuable

decorative factor, a handsome general pattern. He knew well how to spare his labor and so apportion it that expenditure of time and thought should be in economic relation to his result.

In giving to Pinturicchio his place in the history of Italian art, the substitution of a rich surface for the intellectual treatment which goes deeper, of graceful pattern for a manipulation making greater demands upon draughtsman and colorist, is the most notable phenomenon to be considered.

This is because a mode of procedure common within certain limitations to nearly all *quattrocento* masters was pushed farthest by Pinturicchio, who, just when gilded ornament in relief was to pass away from all great mural painting, gave it a kind of apotheosis in the Borgia apartments of the Vatican. Some consideration of these famous apartments is necessary to any real understanding of the painter's methods, since he there gave them their fullest application, using a tonality differing wholly from that of the Libreria, and thereby rendering a study of the latter all the more interesting.

On the walls of the Torre Borgia we at once recognize the economic relation of parts; in the hall of the "Lives of the Saints," for instance, the large mural subjects are fairly well drawn and grouped; but when he came to the divisions of the vaulting above, the painter no longer troubled him-

self at all about execution, but set in the middle of his space some handsome pattern, an ædiculus, a throne, or what not, modelled in relief in that gypsum which Vasari condemned, and which lastly was brightly gilded. On either side of the central pattern he placed little men or women kneeling, climbing, holding scrolls, all utterly weak in drawing, weak even in the detail of their silhouette, but excellent in their general pattern. Thus the artist, with but little expenditure of the labor and thought which he furnished, lavished the gold and ultramarine which the Pope furnished, and obtained with the minimum of personal output great richness, indeed splendor, of result. Contrast all this with the methods of Raphael as master-workman of the Vatican loggie; there his apprentices executed, even in the darkest corners, in convolutions of tiniest scrolls passing out of sight in a spandrel point behind some jutting moulding, little figures which recalled, if ever so roughly, the style and amplitude of the master.

The equivalent figures of Pinturicchio are starved and pinched, poor little affairs with no reserve force behind them, but in the general economy of a decoration they, with much less of output, served their purpose as well as the figurines which Raphael inspired and his pupils drew, served it better, indeed, in a way. Photographed and seen in detail by themselves, some of the figures of the loggie scroll-work

or the Vatican tapestry borders would make Pinturicchio's little people of the ceilings seem children's scrawls; but the two painters had different results in view, and produced them each in his own way. Both wished for a rich effect, but Raphael sought cheerful elegance which should be neo-classic and should not depart from the great tradition. Pinturicchio refused to part with one jot of the *quattrocento* paraphernalia of the decoration; he knew that a Borgia bull in gold relief upon ultramarine, surrounded by gilded scrolls backed by the same rich blue, would "carry" better, would make a far stronger effect as one looked along the vaulting, than could any figurine in simple fresco, no matter how large the movement, how good the modelling of the muscles, that Perino or Giulio had executed and Raphael had inspired.

So Niccolo di Betto went on in his own way, modelling his bulls and rams and little temples in gypsum; emphasizing the lines of a youth's armor, breastplate and girdle, greaves and collar, with rows of gilded disks, relieved slightly, but quite highly enough to catch the light, and backing his figures with a reticulated pattern again in relief of gold.

The painter of to-day shrugs his shoulders in surprise at the method and stares in delight at the result, for the great artist Time has taken a share in the work. When the color was fresh four hundred

years ago, the violence in contrast in certain parts must have been shocking, but now the ultramarine has bloomed in spots of green and purple, the gold is bright here, tarnished there; disintegration of surface has helped rather than hindered, and as a result is seen the richest fresco-color in Italy; only mosaic or glass can surpass it.

We have gone afield with Pinturicchio and followed Pope Pius from the Libreria of Siena to the Vatican, but the journey is necessary to the full comprehension of the painter's product; and if before leaving Rome in thought, we remember Niccolo's frescoes in the churches of Ara Cœli and in S. M. del Popolo; even if on our way back to the Libreria we stop at Spello, we shall find our painter, as in the Vatican, always the man who succeeds by right of fancy and fertility and by a frank renunciation of the finest methods in mural painting in favor of greater gorgeousness and richer surface. In the Borgia apartments the dominant color effect is of ultramarine and gold; in the Libreria the basis is white, the white of the plastered walls, and their light tonality is what yields the cheerful quality which here replaces the gorgeous richness of the Roman work.

Against this light-colored background the drama of the life of Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini as cardinal and pope unrolls itself among emperors and queens, guards and pages, bishops, priests, and Turks, who

stand under canopies or about thrones or carry papal chairs, — canopies, thrones, and chairs alike furnishing to Pinturicchio the raised gold patterns that he loved, while soldiers offer to the artist their shields and weapons for like embossing, and even the pages of the middle distance contribute at least a trifle of a belt-clasp or dagger-handle to be raised and gilded. It is delightfully decorative, and yet the very negation of aerial perspective, since these distant figures are brought forward by their relieved patterns to, as it were, the footlights of the stage.

Certain critics have praised Pinturicchio's landscapes; they are indeed pleasant reminders of the Umbrian background, a background at once so lovely and so noble that *any* reminder of it is grateful, but to compare them with the landscapes of Perugino is injustice to the latter. Imagine a little church or temple in raised and gilded gypsum stuck against the middle distance of Pietro's solemn background of the Maddalena de' Pazzi fresco; it would seem and would be, an excrescence, but in the Libreria, where the art, good as it is, is on a lower plane, belt-clasp and crown, throne and sword-handle, are entertaining parts in a vastly entertaining whole. And that it is entertaining, cheerful, wholesome, and pleasant to the eye no one will deny. Pinturicchio *saltavit et placuit* truly, and it is enough, for, alas! how many dance and how few please.

## IX

For the complete expression of the complex soul of her Siena had to wait for the dexterous Lombard who in 1501 knocked at her gate. Here was indeed a painter after her own heart. No frigid Florentine this, with the memories of chisel-work in dusty *botteghe* clogging his brush; no student of "anatomies" with a weakness for joints and attachments, prone, therefore, to thrust a meagre Jerome or a gaunt Magdalen into a tender brood of angels or the blithest of Holy Families; no curious, erudite experimenter seeking after a (possibly) fatiguing perfection and juggling with light and shadow; no precisian or pedant he, but one to whom Temperament had been so bountiful that he had ignored the favors of that more niggardly mistress, Training.

Invited to Siena by the noble family of the Spanocchi, patronized by Chigi, Sodoma (Giovan Antonio Bazzi) found his native element in the capricious and voluptuous republic; and Siena soon discovered in him the whimsical scatterbrain and facile painter, her most faithful exponent. She had but scant enthusiasm for Beccafumi's cold academies; she bestowed but a half-hearted admiration

on Peruzzi's spare elegance; she disregarded the strictures of the correct and respectable Vasari, and loaded Bazzi with commissions and admiration. What were mastery of perspective, unfailing sense of proportion, balanced composition, compared with a vivid personality expressing itself with agile facility and possessed of exquisite sensitiveness to grace and beauty!

And then the character of the man himself was one to captivate the Sienese, among whom individuality ran riot. Here was no Sano *deditus Deo;* no sour-faced frequenter of monks, but a good fellow; a contemner of conventions; a dandy, devoted to fine clothes; a sporting man, too, with a pretty taste in horseflesh, and a prince of jesters to whom a practical joke was dearer than reputation or personal safety. What a wellspring of joy to the gilded youth of Siena was this frolicsome gossip, who would lay down his brush to finger the lute or grasp the bridle, and who could paint you the suavest Madonna in a studio full of roistering sparks. Imagine the decorous and laborious Vasari visiting such a lawless household, and the continual shocks to which his bourgeois susceptibilities must have been subjected. His animosity to Bazzi is almost accounted for by the mere difference of temperament in the two men.

How could the "most noble art of design" be

worthily practised by a freakish fellow who made friends and comrades of beasts, and who owned a familiar raven which, to the mystification and annoyance of dignified persons from Florence, could exactly counterfeit his master's voice? And was not Bazzi's explanation, that he kept the bird by him in order that it "might teach a theological jackass how to speak," an aggravation of his offence? Could sound painting be reasonably expected from a pretentious dauber who bought fast horses like a noble, and who had the impudence to win the race of Saint Barnabà in Florence over the heads of Florentines, biped and quadruped? It would seem that effrontery could not go farther, but Sodoma had found the means of gilding the refined gold of his iniquity by insulting the Signory as well. Messer Giorgio was constitutionally incapable of sympathizing with a reckless wag who joyed in carrying a jest beyond the bounds of propriety, and who was no respecter of persons.

Bazzi has paid dearly for his mocking humor, or rather, his lawless indulgence of it. Vasari's biassed judgment has formed opinion for four hundred years, and the gifted Lombard has suffered from his censure. Poor Giovan Antonio! much shall be forgiven him, for he loved much those dumb sentient creatures who can only reward kindness with devoted affection that is all the truer, perhaps, because it is

mute. They must be their pranksome master's best advocates with those who love man's "little brothers."

The other reasons for Vasari's unjust treatment of Sodoma are as yet undiscovered. As a man (not as an artist) the Lombard painter was constantly vilified and abused by the usually impartial biographer. Vasari's friendship and admiration for Beccafumi may have prejudiced him against Bazzi, Beccafumi's rival; perhaps there is some truth in the story that Bazzi laughed at Vasari's biographies (which were seen by many in manuscript long before their publication), and thus roused the rancor of their author. Wherever Vasari remains an art critic, he is honest and unprejudiced; his blame is just, his praise not stinted, when he speaks of Giovan Antonio's best works. When he writes of the man and not the artist, he is, on the contrary, censorious, even bitter, and most unfair; the love of fine clothes, which Vasari finds dignified and decorous in Leonardo, the master, is ridiculous in Giovan Antonio, the "jack-pudding" and "mountebank" pupil. Da Vinci's admirable love for animals is equally reprehensible in Bazzi; and the latter's passion for racing, shared by all the Sienese citizens and the Florentine nobles, is most objectionable in the painter. In Siena it was, and still is, accounted a great honor to win the *Palio*. Indeed, what was vainglorious in Sodoma was proper pride in a Florentine; it was a Tuscan

custom to decorate the windows upon *festa* days by hanging out rich stuffs and banners, and the cloth-of-gold racing-prizes of the Alessandri were famous in Florentine archives. Whatever the Vercellese artist does, as a man, is ill done, according to our author, but we may remember that while several of Vasari's stories told to the artist's discredit are disproved by documents, not one is confirmed. Bazzi seems to have spent the last years of his life in retirement at Siena with his family, and Vasari's statement that his wife was separated from him is unsupported by documentary evidence. We know that in 1531 and in 1541 she was living with him, and we have no proof that she ever left him.

It is highly probable that, after all, Giorgio's injustice to Bazzi came primarily from an inability to understand him. The whimsical, roguish Lombard, with a little of the charlatan and much of the boy in his character, was incomprehensible to the earnest, studious, laborious Florentine, and Bazzi's love of frolic and his light-hearted willingness to appear worse than he was, gave Vasari sufficient cause to distrust and despise him. The most charitable and not wholly unreasonable estimate of Giovan Antonio's character is that he was the sixteenth-century counterpart of a type of artist constantly seen among the students of the European art schools of to-day; namely, the *blagueur d'atelier*, the studio-jester

The *blagueur* is a madcap, sometimes an idler, sometimes a busybody; constantly boasting of his misdoings, which are always exaggerated, and sometimes purely imaginary, and sacrificing anything at any time for what he considers a joke. He is no respecter of persons, is more or less foul-mouthed, generally more; delights in being conspicuous, and, above all, troublesome; joys in shocking the respectable and outraging the conventional; personal dignity does not exist for him, and reserve is an unknown quantity; but he is quick-witted, good-hearted, and as ready to help as to hinder. He is utterly improvident, and though sometimes capable of brilliant artistic performances, is not a little handicapped by laziness, though in time of war or revolution the laziness gives way to action, and the *blagueur* has supported his convictions or served his country as well as the most earnest of his comrades. Just what Giovan Antonio was like we shall probably never know; Raphael seems to have esteemed him, and he was a favorite with the Sienese; there is no testimony to support the charges against him, and the story of his domestic unhappiness is disproved by documentary evidence. That he was often lazy and indifferent seems to be shown by his work, but we cannot call him weak artistically, for he was distinctly individual and saw nature from a personal point of view; perhaps no artist ever possessed

more temperament than did this spoiled child of painting.

Considered from the point of view of technique pure and simple, Bazzi was unequal as draughtsman and colorist, indifferent as composer. He could draw excellently, but rarely did; his heads are a souvenir of Leonardo's with a strong added personality of Bazzi's own; as to their bodies, his figures often look as if some of Raphael's frescoed men and women had been painted with so liquid a medium that they had *spread* upon the walls and passed beyond their outlines, until they seemed boneless and gelatinous.

M. Müntz, praising the figures of the Farnesina frescoes, says of them, "*Les figures sont du Raphaël, mais du Raphaël plus fluide et plus suave.*" This is precisely what they are to so great a degree that their fluidity has made some of them relatively shapeless and very unsatisfactory to the student, although their suavity has, it is true, much of the charm which never deserted Sodoma.

In these frescoes of the Oratory of San Bernardino Giovanni has attempted to be monumental, and has succeeded in obtaining a certain impressiveness and an *ensemble* which is thoroughly characteristic of the amplification that art had received in the beginning of the sixteenth century, but these figures are lacking in construction, still more are they lacking in subtlety of drawing. They look exactly like

figures in old tapestries, which have been stretched and pulled until not one line in face or figure is correct.

The admirable figures (see especially the Saint Victor) in the Palazzo Pubblico have all the qualities which belong to those in San Bernardino, and most of the qualities which are lacking in the latter. The grave and beautiful warrior-saints are constructed, drawn, and modelled with seriousness and skill, and they are noble in expression as well. The San Benedetto is also admirable. If Bazzi had always worked as earnestly as he did upon these figures, few painters would have equalled him. The frescoes at Monte Oliveto without possessing the Florentine hardness of contour, resemble Milanese work and are agreeably firm in silhouette, yet not dry or "cut out." In spite, however, of an occasional effort to better his slurring and slovenly manner of drawing, Bazzi is generally lacking, and wilfully lacking, in "the probity of art."

His color (being more an affair of temperament and more instinctive) is sometimes warm and transparent; sometimes distinguished, as in the "Swooning of Saint Catherine,"; sometimes monochromatic, as in the "Saint Sebastian;" is often pleasing and never disagreeable.

He had little capacity as a composer of groups, and was most at home when he had but one or

two figures to deal with; composition did not come easily to him; lacking mental order and sensitiveness to distribution of masses, deficient also in the capacity for continued effort in a given direction, which is indispensable to the evolution of monumental composition, Bazzi is confused and incoherent when he attempts to handle a number of figures. Nowhere are the abilities and the limitations of a painter more clearly demonstrated than in the chapel of San Domenico. There the noble lines of the three figures in the "Swoon of Saint Catherine" stand side by side with the jumbled and crowded fresco of the "Execution of Tuldo," which affords a felicitous illustration of Degas's criticism: "*On fait une foule avec cinq personnes, non avec cinquante.*"

Sodoma's finest performances are his single figures, and it is in them that we read his title clear to the admiration of his contemporaries. The Saint Catherine fainting under the intolerable glory of her espousal is one of those relatively rare works which give to Bazzi a very high rank as a complete artist, and not merely as an artist of phenomenal temperament. He has treated a very difficult subject not only with charm but with skill and thought, adding to his natural suavity a care in the grouping of the three lovely heads, in the arrangement of the draperies, and in the rendering of the latter, which

is not often found in his works. As for the spiritual side of the picture, it may be said that the poignant delights of mysticism were never more adequately interpreted. The "Saint Sebastian," which "combines the beauty of the Greek Hylas with the sentiment of Christian martyrdom," is in a certain delicate loveliness and simple pathos unsurpassed by any work of its time. Yet in spite of the fact that its comeliness is informed with spiritual significance, that the representation of suffering is free from exaggeration, in some subtle way it announces the decadence, the work of Guido Reni, and of the seventeenth century. Although the drawing of the figure is far more serious, the silhouette more studied, than in most of Bazzi's work, it must be admitted that as a whole it is lacking in solidity and is even papery-looking in its lack of modelling.

The figure of Saint James on horseback, in the church of San Spirito, has been much praised; but though it fills the space decoratively it is a poor affair in execution, slurred and careless, and is little to the credit of a master who was capable of far better work. The horse especially is singularly ill drawn for the work of an artist who was himself a sporting-man and a judge of horseflesh.

To estimate at their true value Bazzi's freshness of feeling and natural charm combined with sensu-

ousness and an unfailing sense of humor, we must leave Siena and drive over a dull-colored cretaceous soil furrowed by *balze*, to the monastery of Monte Oliveto.

No environment could be more inspiring than the magnificent mountain country about the convent, made marvellously picturesque by the countless ravines which seam the hills on either side of the winding, ribbon-like road that leads from Buon Convento to the monastery. From its terraces are seen Montalcino on its aerial platform, the delicate lines of Monte Amiata crowning a wide sweep of hills, Chiusuri on its height, the valleys torn and rent by the torrent-beds; a strange landscape grand and impressive in its desolation. Almost equally stern and forbidding is the aspect of the monastery itself, a huge pile of purplish-red brick, raised upon gigantic buttresses above a wave-like crest of the hill. Its austere lines are broken only by the church with its square campanile and the machicolations of the fortress-like gate, pierced with loopholes, which defends the entrance of the long avenue of cypresses leading to the convent courtyard.

Amidst these solemn surroundings, more sympathetic to the fiery and virile genius of his predecessor Signorelli than to the mischievous and beauty-loving Bazzi, the cycle of Saint Benedict was painted. In these frescoes, commenced in 1506

and still in admirable preservation, there is nothing which rises to the height of two or three of Sodoma's best pictures, but as a series it is, on the whole, the most *amiable* of his works. In their wide, sunlit cloister, protected from damp and wind by the glass with which the government has filled its outer arches, nothing could be more cheerful or attractive than these clear-colored frescoes, light in tone, free in their handling, yet far more *serrés* and close in drawing than are many of the artist's more pretentious pictures.

There is a certain childlike sweetness, a simplicity of arrangement, a genial sense of humor which is as completely suited to the presentation of these indescribably petty miracles and trifling temptations as the genius of Signorelli was unsuited to it. The subjects themselves, forming "a painted *novella*" of monastic life, are utterly puerile in character, and their whole charm is in their treatment. Of such motives as "Saint Benedict miraculously mends a Sieve," Bazzi, by the beauty and sweetness of his types; by the introduction of portraits; by perfect naturalness; above all, by that *naïf* charm which five years later was forever stricken from Italian art by the splendors of the *Stanze* and the lightnings of the *Sistina*; by the qualities of simplicity, freshness, and vivacity, Giovan Antonio turns these rather absurd subjects into a series of pictures which please

enduringly. The frescoes of the angles of the court are more than pleasing and are executed with greater thought and care than the smaller compositions. Tradition whispers that this superior excellence was the result of an increase in the painter's stipend, that the agile brush "which danced to the sound of coins" (*ballava al suono dei denari*) was properly piped to. Indeed, Bazzi's vivid personality, his pranks and eccentricities, wove a brilliant scarlet thread through the gray woof of the monks' lives, and legend has been busy here and has handed down an anecdote for each fresco. In one, Bazzi painted the portrait of a greedy monk slyly abstracting his meditative neighbor's manchet of bread; in another above the terse title, "*Fiorenzo conduce male femmine al convento*," he earned his name of *Mattaccio*.

In this fresco, wherein the wicked Florentius, who was the *diabolus ex machina* of the cycle of Saint Benedict, and supplied the indispensable dramatic element, brought singing and dancing women to the convent to turn the good fathers' minds from holy things. Hidden by his scaffolding, Bazzi painted these winsome girls, who are even to-day utterly bewitching and far too well calculated to turn poor mortal man's thoughts from heaven to earth. These seductive ladies were represented in the costume of Mother Eve, their worthy predecessor in evil doing. And we have only to remember the sweet, shame-

faced figure of our peccant ancestress in the "Limbo" of the Academy to realize how alluring they must have been. Imagine the scandal, the laughter, the scolding, which filled the cloister when the planks were removed, and fancy the blissful elation of Bazzi and his color-grinders and apprentices.

Of course the artist was immediately obliged to turn milliner and to perform one of the most urgent of the temporal works of mercy, but Sodoma was willing enough to double his labor in the good cause of a practical joke, and the group of girls, a harmony of melodic lines and fluent movement, remains one of the most delight-inspiring creations of the Renaissance. Every note in the scale of coquetry from demure dignity to mocking provocation is delicately yet surely touched by these long-limbed dancers and coy *donzelle*. Plastically there is still something of the fifteenth rather than the sixteenth century about these figures; they are graceful, not monumental; are suggestive of Leonardo da Vinci; are characteristic of the northern as distinguished from the Tuscan manner, and possess the rhythmic movement and enticing loveliness of Bazzi's ideal type.

In the student of "the human document" the full-length portrait of Giovan Antonio stimulates speculation and seems to afford a clew to that strange personality in which Ariel and Puck met on equal

terms. In the long series of the portraits of the Renaissance painters many are nobler than this one, none are more characterized; and though the artistic treatment is somewhat summary, the psychological treatment is subtile. Nature wrote wag and daredevil in capital letters on this face, with its large features, full lips, heavy brows, and irregular nose, — a real *nez fripon*, witty and impertinent. Nor does the characterization stop at the audacious, clever head under its loose mane of black hair. In the slender, lithe body of the gentleman rider (evidently Bazzi's racers were no weight-carriers); in the introduction of pet animals, the tame badger begging for a caress, and the offensively loquacious raven; in the rich costume, bought by the painter from a noble Milanese who had recently taken the habit, we recognize the freakish model of Vasari's darkly shaded portrait, made human and sympathetic by a more genial brush.

M. Müntz tells us that justice will not be done to this master until he has been placed near Correggio, indeed by his side (*immédiatement à côté de lui*). It is very rarely that one takes issue with the enlightened criticism of the author of the *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, but in this case it is impossible to accept his dictum. Great as he is, Bazzi, if placed by the side of Correggio, stands on a far lower plane. Charm he has and style to an

extraordinary degree, but where in his work is there any masterliness to be compared with that shown by Correggio in his cupola of Parma or his Saint Jerome? One is a discoverer and a creator, the other a most gifted and inventive Master of the Revels, who can amuse and fascinate and delight, but to whom the divine afflatus is denied.

The same charm of personality, of abandon, of naturalness, which subjugated the Sienese is potent over the critic who attempts to analyze the works of the fantastic Lombard. Bazzi reminds one of the old tale of the prince to whom all good things were given and yet whose career was spoiled by the malicious gift of one wicked fairy. No painter was more richly dowered by nature: facility, elegance, sweetness, were his; a keen and delicate feeling for grace of line and beauty of feature; remarkable powers of assimilation, and a fertile fancy; occasionally he attained distinction, and he rarely, even in his most careless moments, lacked style. But all these great qualities were obscured by one fatal defect, — frivolity. There is no better example of how much and how little temperament can do for an artist, or what painting becomes when it is divorced from hard thinking and laborious study. The absence of the appearance of effort, which is such a different thing from the actual absence of effort, is replaced in his work by a slovenliness that

is the more irritating because we feel that it is wil ful negligence. Every one of his more ambitious pictures manifests carelessness or lassitude in some particular. His finest performances are his single figures (the Roxana in Vienna or the Eve or the Saint Sebastian); he lacked the mental coherence, the capacity for intellectual tension, which are indispensable for the planning and execution of large compositions, and though pathos and poetic feeling were within his scope, he was wanting in elevation of thought and, above all, in conviction.

Yet when all these reserves are made, when we have recovered from the annoyance produced by the wanton neglect of splendid gifts, how much remains to delight us in Bazzi's work. His sense of humor, a rare quality and one that is almost incompatible with intense convictions, which enlivens the frescoes of Monte Oliveto; his capacity for characterization, his vitality, the diversity and suppleness of his genius, are all potent factors in the sum of our pleasure. The greatest of these is doubtless his sensitiveness to physical beauty, above all the beauty of youth, of girls and adolescents. Who can forget the undulating lines of his dancers' slender bodies, or the morbid sweetness of the swooning Catherine, or the lovely cowering figure of Eve, or the coy, almost simpering, but altogether bewitching Roxana? Equally persistent in the

memory are the figures of the young warriors Alexander and Saint Victor, the beautiful Vulcan of the Farnesina villa, the transpierced Saint Sebastian, the charming boys in the Saint Benedict cycle. Bazzi's feminine ideal was derived from Leonardo's; less distinguished, it is more seductive; less noble than the subtile Madonnas of Luini, it is more captivating. An oval face with languishing eyes, an overripe curved mouth, the upper lip much fuller than the lower one; a delicate nose slightly *retroussé;* a softly rounded chin, and a slender, long-limbed body, such was Giovan Antonio's type. Add to it those *arie di testa* which Vasari admired, sometimes an air of dreamy voluptuousness which is as far removed from coarseness as it is from severity; again, a pathos and tenderness that suggest the influence of Perugino, and a quality of youth and freshness something dawn-like and spring-like, and you have the ideal that took Siena by storm. Naturally this sweetness often degenerates into insipidity or becomes cloying; mere loveliness cannot atone for the lack of nobility any more than facility and fertility of invention can replace high thought and strenuous endeavor; but, after all, to analyze the faults of this alluring genius is almost as destructive to the fine edge of the critical spirit as to study the physical defects of a beautiful person.

To follow the triumphant progress of the Renaissance which entered Siena so brilliantly with Pinturicchio and Bazzi, would be a pleasant task; to retrace, step after step, their wanderings about the town from their homes in the Via dei Maestri, over the "Contrada Pictorum" to the churches where they worked, and to the palaces they painted, would be an easy one. For they were ubiquitous folk, and permeated the whole city, from the shrine of its saints to its outer gates. Pleasant, too, it would be to study the works and lives of Siena's youngest sons, Peruzzi and Beccafumi; pleasant to follow reverently in the footsteps of that impassioned daughter of Saint Dominic and the people, Saint Catherine; pleasant, also, but hardly as edifying, to wander with the novelists through the olive-orchards and those groves and gardens which Æneas Sylvius dedicated to Venus.

Pleasantest of all it is to dwell awhile with the memories that crowd these streets and haunt these walls, — memories tragic, dramatic, romantic; for the perfervid Ghibelline city was the home of romance, from the days of Dante's minstrel singing in the Campo for his friend's ransom, to our own times, when Alfieri could be seen galloping outside the Camollia gates in a whirlwind of dust. It is, perhaps, this romantic past; perhaps the splendid *élans* of self-sacrifice, the spontaneous acts of gener-

osity in which her history is so rich; the ardent faith in God and man which never deserted her; and the grandeur of her martyrdom, that lend Siena an irresistible feminine charm. "*Il y a de la femme dans tout ce que l'on aime.*" Her contradictions are full of fascination and remind us that if, in her hour of need, the town gave herself to Virgin Mary, the Mother of Beauty has tarried within her walls as well.

All those who know Siena have felt this subtile coercion, and have opened their hearts to the beautiful city which wrote upon its gate, "*Cor magis tibi Sena pandit.*"

# THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

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In these days of triumphant specialism, when brush and chisel, burin and aquafortist's tool, perform feats that would have set the Renaissance agog; when a phalanx of French artists stand armed *cap-à-pie* with all the varied knowledge that the years have brought to Ars Longa; when art pours in from England, Sweden, Russia, Japan; when America has already started in the great torch race, sure to hold the light high (how high perhaps we hardly dare to dream), why is it that we turn again and again to the old masters, the men of Florence and of Venice, of the quiet galleries and palaces of a land older than our own?

Is it because they take us out of the bustle and struggle and beckon us to their feet in the half light of the chapterhouse, in the sun-dappled stillness of the cloister or the deserted chamber of state where they sit enthroned and tranquil, nowise toiling for recognition? Is it not rather because theirs was the springtime of art, because they were in the gold of the morning and had its golden touch?

Theirs was the high-hearted conviction which has seen no disillusion. They had not even found out

what they could not do, and their *naïf* fervor set a halo even on their awkwardness. Eternal youth was theirs and its sublime confidence and audacity. Spontaneity was theirs, and the joy of the explorer as well. To-day we are bewildered worshippers at many shrines, and are burdened with a too costly heritage; they were unvexed by warring ideals and were the heirs of opportunity.

It is because they were the sons of morning that we find even in their lesser works (*"detur amanti"*) something to reward patient study, something of the glamour of the reawakening, of the gladness of earnest endeavor, of the serenity of achievement, and, in spite of the science and perfected technique of modern painting, the hill towns of Tuscany and Umbria still rise as high altars of art; Rome yet remains the painter's pantheon, and the lagoons of Venice still shine for us with the color of Titian and still hold the bituminous depths of Tintoretto.

Among all the Italian towns, Florence possesses the highest place, for in that long period from 1300 to 1580, which covers the Italian Renaissance in its various phases, she was the focal point for at least two hundred years. This epoch of art evolution may be conveniently divided into four periods: that of the precursors, of Niccolà and Giotto; that of the early Renaissance, with the group which surrounded Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici; of the full Renais-

sance, when Rome called Tuscan and Umbrian alike into her service; and of that later time which, decadent elsewhere, saw the glorious supremacy of Venice.

Thus through fully two-thirds of the art movement Florence marched at the head of Italy, and we see the Florentine first as the strong man in armor, merchant and soldier at once, beating off Barbarossa, conquering his civic rights one by one, and setting the Phrygian cap of liberty upon his helmet; a later and milder age twists garlands about it, and sculptures his shield, and his son grows up a pale-cheeked student, with a crop of curls, a brush and chisel in his *scarsella* and a great book clasped upon his breast.

As we look at old pictures of this protagonist of independence, this Athene of towns who wore helmet and laurel alike and held palette and lance at once, we see that five hundred years ago she was still the grim-visaged and simple-mannered Florence of the Divine Comedy.

We turn from the pages of the pictured record. Another short hundred years transforms the fortress-city of Corso Donati into the palace-city of Lorenzo de' Medici; the Renaissance has come to its full tide and the Florence of Dante, which, lovely as it appeared in the dreams of the exile, was brown and austere as a Franciscan friar in its out-

ward semblance, had by the end of the fifteenth century become a treasury of beauty. Many different causes had contributed to this result: commercial prosperity; municipal freedom; the intense civic pride, the passionate love of the city that then stood for patriotism; the newly awakened plastic sense; the Italian desire to *far figura;* the lover's instinct to adorn the beloved; and the possession of generations of artists equal to their task, all united to dower Florence with innumerable treasures. The best blood of the time was running into this new channel and coursing there more and more strongly. The incessant warfare of earlier times, the death-grapple between city and city and between rival factions and greater and lesser guilds had ended in utter exhaustion, an exhaustion too often making way for a local tyrant; but the marvellous vitality of Italy, which in one way or another never flagged, showed itself in her art. The hand, tired of striking with the sword, struck lightly with the chisel, and the cunning Medici set the unwitting artists to gilding the chains of Florence. There were chains indeed; but the craftsman lives in a republic of ideas, and his craft was honored by the tyrant; he alone of all men was free, for the Inquisition had not yet begun to prescribe the action of the people of fresco or panel, or to peer through the eyeholes of its cowl into parchment

and picture to ferret out heresy. Cosimo the Ancient might say in his cynical way that it took only a few yards of scarlet cloth to make a burgher, but he never applied his yard-measure estimate to humanists or artists.

A noble field lay open to the latter; their works did not disappear into private galleries; art belonged to the whole city, and was a matter of personal interest and pride to each citizen; the façade or the monument was his, and he walked out to see it uncovered, in a flutter of pleasant excitement, and quite prepared to fasten his epigram or his sonnet at its base. For all Florence became at once customer and connoisseur, and fairly went mad with enthusiasm over its new masterpieces. The Signiory mingled with the business of grave embassies questions of decoration of public palaces, and art matters were treated like affairs of state. A daughter of the Republic, art's best service was given to the city, to the market-place, the townhall, and the church. This was no courtly official art, shut up in palaces; no burgher art, withdrawn into rich men's houses or cramped into prettiness to please a caprice; no carefully nurtured exotic, foreign to all its environment; it was democratic, municipal; "of the people, by the people, for the people;" stooping to the humblest offices; carving the public fountain, where goodwives washed their

cabbages and filled their clashing metal buckets, and rising heavenward on the broad curves of Brunelleschi's dome. It was a deep-rooted, many-branched growth of the soil; an integral part of daily life; a need, a passion, and a delight at once.

It almost seemed as if Art, Orpheus-like, held sway over nature. Rough crags piled themselves up into palaces, iron bowed itself into lovely curves, and bronze filled the hollow mould with fair shapes; glistening marbles covered the bare façades; acanthus and laurel, oak and ivy, lilies and pomegranates twined around the church pillars, climbed to the cornice and clustered about the deep-set windows, ran over choir stalls, and thrust themselves between the yellowed parchments of the choral books. With them came the birds to perch among the bronze twigs and nest in the marble foliage; the lions crawled from their lairs to crouch beneath church pillars; unicorns, griffins, and strange sea-monsters came at the magician's bidding, to support a shield or bound along a cornice. Night lent her stars to roof a banqueting-hall; the planets shone over the exchange, and summer dwelt on the painted wall while winter whitened the streets outside.

Obedient to the call of Art the gods returned to earth. Fauns lurked in the rose-thickets, and the

falling fountain splashed the long limbs of reed-crowned nymphs. Behind the laurels Apollo struck his lyre, and in the shadow of oak and ilex glimmered the dryads. Eros again upheld beauty's mirror, once more Athene looked down from the library shelf and Italy remembered that she was the child of Greece.

Art then held both life and death in her hands. At her command the dead arose. She gave to longing eyes the image of the loved one, and bade a woman's face bloom for centuries. She touched the bare walls of the cloister, and a celestial vision broke through their chill whiteness. It was Art who laid the laurel on the brow of the illustrious dead, and such brief fame as we may know was hers to bestow.

It was within the field of this world of art that the hostile cities of the Renaissance found their one neutral ground, where the shrill voice of controversy was hushed, and hatred dropped its dagger; where the old feud was forgotten; where Guelph and Ghibelline, Pallesco and Piagnone met as friends, united by a common sympathy, swayed by a common delight.

Something of this was dimly understood, even by the little apprentices who ground the colors and kept the clay moist. They knew that the masters went and came unharmed through harried country

and hostile states; they saw the Magnifico buy the pictures of a follower of the Friar. Even civic strife spared the artist who worked for the glory of the town, and was therefore sacred to the man of the Renaissance, who, though he could hate fiercely and strike hard, loved his city as a mother, and adorned her like a bride.

The city so loved and so adorned was not very different from the fair town set in the hollow of the hills which we admire to-day; it has lost its proud zone of ramparts and the glow of mediæval color, but otherwise it is comparatively unchanged since Donatello lodged in the street of the Melon, and Benvenuto kept shop on the old bridge. Here we can walk arm-in-arm with Gossip Vasari; every turn brings us face to face with the memory of a world-famed master. The very name of a street suggests some great artistic achievement; a few lines of inscription on a house-front start a train of association which quickens the pulse of the lover of beauty; all about us the very stones are eloquent, and if we would study the greatest of modern art epochs, and understand the environment of the Renaissance artist, — the conditions under which he lived and labored, — we have but to look at the city upon which he set his seal as a king stamps his effigy on the coin of the realm.

Four hundred years ago morning entered Flor-

ence much as it does to-day, slipping unchallenged through the ponderous gates, stealing like a gray nun through the narrow streets, glimmering faintly through the grated windows, and, leaving the lower stories of the crag-like houses still dark and sombre, touched with light the dome of the cathedral and the crests of those stern towers which spring upward like unsheathed swords to guard the white and rosy beauty of our Lady of the Flower. As the dawn struggled through the leaded casements, or the deep arches of the workshop, it saw the artist already at labor. Sometimes it paled the light fixed to Michelangelo's forehead, with which, "like a Cyclops," he worked through the long night; or surprised Master Luca patiently freezing his fingers over his new invention, the *terra invetriata*; or, maybe, it put out the lanterns which Ghiberti's workmen carried in their nightly walks from the furnaces in the Via Sant' Egidio to the Baptistery. Work began early for the Florentine artist; for the painter, sculptor, architect, worker in gold, iron, or wood, was first of all a handicraftsman with a handicraftsman's simple tastes and frugal habits. *Arte*, art, meant but craft or trade, and later, by extension, guild of craftsmen, and was applied to the corporations of cloth-dressers and silk-weavers, as well as to the associations of architects and sculptors.

"Then painters did not play the gentleman," small distinction was made between the artist and the artisan ; and, though now and then a banquet at the new house in the Via Larga, or a little junketing in Albertinelli's wine-shop, or a gay supper at the Pot Luck Club (Compagnia del Paiuolo), opposite the Foundling Hospital, might tempt him to keep late hours, morning naps were exceptions, and the stone-mason, when he came through the dim twilight of the shadowed streets to his day's work on church or palace, found Brunelleschi or Gozzoli there before him. No wonder such men rose early ; the whole world of art lay before them, unconquered, unexplored. The mysteries of nature were to be solved, the lost treasures of antiquity regained. The processes of technique, the media of artistic expression, were to be discovered; and for such achievement the days were all too short, and the nights as well. If they would play the sluggard, the voice of Florence itself awoke them; for with the broadening day the bells of Giotto's tower began to ring the Angelus, filling the vibrating air with solemn melody, as one after another, from the iron throats of San Lorenzo, of San Michele, and of Santa Felicità came answering peals, while on the circling hills, gray with olive or dark with pine, the bells of convent and chapel and parish church echoed faintly, greeting each other with the angeli-

cal salutation. There were few artists who did not bow their heads and begin the day with the poetic orison, honoring "the Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and what better prayer could there be for men whose chief care lay in the portrayal of that same flesh, and who were "to paint man, man, whatever the issue."

Early as it was, the city was astir, and the streets about the cathedral were thronged with people on their way to early mass; home-staying house-wives were gossiping on the doorsteps as in Dante's day; long-gowned burghers, like Filippo Strozzi, who built palaces, bought rare Greek manuscripts, and bribed royalty, were abroad for their marketing, to chaffer over a couple of fowls or a handful of vegetables. Groups of sun-burned peasants, in their gayest gear, among them a fresh-faced girl or two of the Nencia type, "white as cream-cheese and round as a little sausage," were crowding into the Duomo to say a few aves before some favorite shrine; here and there, with ink-horn at his belt, a scholar passed — Pico or Poliziano — on his way to the Medici palace, or the still, green gardens of the Academy. Knots of leather-clad craftsmen, bare-armed cloth-dressers from the Calimala, silk-weavers bound for San Biagio, goldsmiths hurrying to their work in the Pellicceria, jostled each other in the narrow way. Here, too, were matrons of the old

school, austerely wrapped in cloak and wimple, and blooming girls, whose pearl-wreathed hair and bare throats were hardly shaded by transparent veils, demurely conscious of the admiration they excited, and not averse to letting a young painter's eyes enjoy their comeliness. Had not Ginevra dei Benci, one of the proudest beauties of Florence, sat for Messer Domenico Bigordi? and he who would see the fair wife of Francesco Pugliese limned to the life need only visit the little church outside the walls, where Filippino painted her as Madonna. What pretty girl was not ambitious to figure in a fresco, or pose for a saint, tricked out with halo and symbol? When did adoration ever come amiss? or when was a bold glance and a fervently whispered "*bella*" really resented?

Meantime she who hoped some day to see her own portrait as Saint Catherine or Barbara or Lucy, behind the blazing altar-tapers, dimmed with the cloud of fragrant smoke, enjoyed a somewhat grosser incense. In this town of tiny streets and thickset houses, whose inhabitants had grown up together in close quarters, generation after generation; where family loves and hatreds were matters of heritage and tradition, and where each man was as well acquainted with his neighbor's affairs as with his own, none of these young ladies were unknown to their admirers, who could estimate each fair one's dower to a florin

On the heads and hands of these pretty girls the passing goldsmith saw his own work in wreath and ring, and when the whole parti-colored crowd swayed and bent like a field of wind-swept irises as a priest and a hurrying acolyte passed with the *viaticum*, even while muttering a prayer for the soul about to pass away, he recognized with pride the silver pyx which had left his master's shop only a week ago. Perhaps it was hardly out of sight before the street began to resound with ringing hoofs and clashing steel, as a company bound on a mission to Siena, escorted by some thirty lances, clattered past; not so fast but that the workmen from Niccolò Caparrà's forges could salute its gallant young captain, whose fine armor, decorated with masques and lions' heads, was their own handiwork. As the soldiers jingled by, the high houses echoing their clangor tenfold, the sculptor modelling a Saint George for the armorers, looked long and wistfully after their leader, who rode with shoulders well-squared and pointed sollerets turned aggressively out, forcing the burgesses to flatten themselves against walls or to retreat incontinently under loggie, and reminding more than one of that roaring young spark of the Adimari, whose iron elbows and steel toes wrought such havoc on Dante's neighbors.

These vividly costumed people of the Renaissance have gone forever from the streets; they have

stepped into the gilded frames of altar-pieces, or faded into the frescoed walls of choir and cloister; they have climbed the palace-stairs and vanished into quiet galleries; they sleep in state in the canopied niches of Desiderio and Rossellino, and lie under the pictured stones of Santa Croce. But the background against which they moved is unaltered. The churches and palaces where painter and sculptor worked, the houses where they lodged, the shops where they sold and taught, the beautiful things they created are still there, and the palaces of Brunelleschi and Michelozzo and Benedetto are yet drawn up in line.

They bear a strange likeness to the mailed ancestors of their builders, these palaces, as they stand facing each other like duellists with a perpetual menace; holding high their blazoned shields, peering distrustfully through their grated windows, barred like the eyeholes of a helmet, thrusting out their torch-holders, defiant gauntlets, into the street, and flaunting their banners over the heads of the passers-by. The deep cornice shades their stern fronts like a hood drawn over a soldier's brows, and as the knight wore a scarf of broidered work or a collar wrought with jewelled shells and flowers over his steel corselet, each rugged façade is softened into beauty by sculptured shrine or gilded escutcheon, cunningly forged lamp-iron and bridle-ring. Into

the grim narrowness of each dark street had come some touch of color, some bit of exquisite ornament; and as the painter hurried to his shop in the morning, or strolled at evening with his lute, he could see on every side the work of some brother artist. Close at hand was Donatello's *stemma*, where the lion of the Martelli ramped upon his azure field; under heavy wreaths of pale-tinted fruit a Robbia Madonna gleamed whitely; the huge *fanale*, or torch-holder, at the corner, bristling with spikes like some tropical cactus, was forged by Nicholas the Bargain-Maker; the rough-hewn palace which darkened the slit of a street, Benedetto of Majano did not live to finish; that window-grating Michelangelo designed, bending the bars outward in beauty's service to hold the elbow cushion or the caged nightingale or the handful of spring flowers in their glazed pot of Faenza-ware; while behind the half-open iron-studded doors Michelozzo's columns rose between the orange-trees.

Who can over-estimate the artistic value of such environment; the unconscious training of the eye; the education of the perceptive faculties, the keen stimulus and the wholesome restraint exercised by the constant presence of a universally recognized standard of excellence? The art student might draw from the antique in the garden of San Marco, or copy the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel in good

company, with Michelangelo and Raphael at his elbow (running the risk of broken bones if he happened to be envied by the studio-bully Torrigiani), and under his master's orders might work up details in a panel, or even follow a cartoon, but the city itself was his real Academy.

All over this city the artists lodged and worked; the places still exist. There are dark arches where, in spite of perpetual twilight, masterpieces grew into being; and there are stairways of heavy gray stone that have been polished and channelled by the shoes of masters who lived long ago.

In the Melon Street (now Via Ricasoli) the memories thicken. There the long-gowned *trecentisti* have walked; Tafi, who set the solemn mosaic upon the dome of the Baptistery, and with him his roguish pupil, Buffalmacco, whose greatest works of art were his monumental practical jokes. Giotto, too, the chief of them all, caped and hooded as we see him in the Portico of the Uffizi, had come a little later to make the "house of the five lamps" trebly illustrious. The lamps are still on the house-front, glimmering above the little shrine where the old painters often stopped to tell their beads before the image of Our Lady, who had been a good friend to their craft ever since the day she sat for its patron, Saint Luke.

Perhaps they passed on thence to that garden

of the Gaddi, in the little street not far away, to which the painter's pomegranate-trees gave the name of *Via del Melarancio*, which it wears even to-day. In the Calzaioli, just beyond the Bigallo, and on the same side with it, about a hundred years after Giotto, Donatello, and Michelozzo "worked together like brothers, perfecting the art of sculpture," carving that tomb of Pope John in the Baptistery, which was the forerunner of all the lovely, Tuscan-Renaissance tombal architecture. Later their mallets rang behind the cathedral at the corner of the Via dei Servi, while the minor music of goldsmith's hammer and niellist's tool was heard from the shops of Pollajuolo and Finiguerra, in the Vaccherecia. Monasteries there are too where famous artists once worked; convents where the sisters painted, like that Plautilla Nelli, who had to make Herods and Judases of the novices, since no man might penetrate the walls. The convents are secularized now, but we still find them in all quarters of the city.

Ghiberti cast his gates in the Via Sant' Egidio; to-day the house shelters the quaint foreign grace of Van der Weyden's Flemish Madonna, and geraniums now flame in the garden of the Via della Pergola, where Benvenuto's furnaces once glowed fiercely as the molten bronze became Perseus.

We visit Michelangelo the boy in the Via

Anguillara; Michelangelo the old man in the Via Ghibellina, and in Via Ginori are the stairs down which the young Raphael has often walked with his host. Andrea del Sarto, with Franciabigio, had his shop in that southern angle of the Piazza Or-San-Michele, where a dark vault gives entrance to a street so narrow that lovers might clasp hands across it from the windows corbelled out above, and where, too, the artists were next door to the palace of their arch-patrons, the merchants of the mighty guild of wool, with its blazon and loggia and battlemented parapet. Fra Bartolommeo got his nickname of Baccio della Porta from the Roman Gate near which he lived, and when later he took the tonsure and renounced his art for a time, his comrade, Albertinelli, discouraged by his loss, dropped palette and brushes and opened a wine-shop under those old houses of the Alighieri where "*nacque il divino poeta.*"

Il Rosso, with his apprentice Battistino and his ape (whom the chronicles leave nameless), made life merry for the monks of Santa Croce; Cellini, born near the modern iron markets and casting his bronze in the Street of the Bower, studied first with Bandini in the Furriers' Quarter, then, under the new dispensation of Duke Cosimo, went with the other goldsmiths to that Ponte Vecchio where the apprentice lads were stationed to offer trinkets to

the passing ladies, and to the same shop whence his bust now looks down upon his successors. So the tale runs, and the list is endless, for Florence remembers her famous men, and the archives beneath the picture gallery of the Uffizi are crammed with records that furnish us house, date, and name, dry bones to which the chroniclers add life, the life of the crowded, narrow-streeted city, with its art, its industry, its busy hours, its leisure, and even its fun and jokes.

For the hard-worked painters found time for the latter, made time for them indeed. Woe to the man who was conceited, credulous, or lazy; his foible was exploited by a dozen past-masters in the science of tormenting; Florentine tongues were proverbially sharp, and constant practice in the wordy warfare of the studio gave them an even finer edge.

The greatest artists — Donatello, Brunelleschi, and, earlier, Buffalmacco — concocted elaborate *beffe* and *burle*, with no pity for their victims. The temptation was great; the ages of faith had not passed away; many good folk, accustomed to believe in miracles, afforded golden opportunities to the practical joker; and if we may believe Sacchetti, Ser Giovanni, and Boccaccio, the wags were equal to the occasion. There was such a fund of credulity lying idle; it was so easy to make Calandrino

believe that he was invisible; to persuade the Doctor that he might sup with Helen and Cleopatra, and to convince Il Grasso that he had changed his identity, that we can hardly blame the painters for farces in which the whole town joined, even the good parish priest playing his part. This fun was rifest perhaps at the noonday hour, when Luigi Pulci takes us into that old market, around which the studios were thickest set, and which, not many years ago, stood just as it was when hungry industry, bent on dining, surged into the Mercato Vecchio.

Here artists, great and small, masters and apprentices, dined; here was dinner enough for all Florence; and the irregular square, round which the tall, soot-stained houses crowded, was a glutton's paradise, in which Margutte would have found all the articles of his credo: his tart and tartlet, his stuffed *beccafichi*, and his good wine. There were meals for all tastes and all purses; one could lunch on fruit and eggs and cheese with Donatello, or sup like a Magnifico on the boar that grinned from the butcher's shop, and only two days before was crunching the acorns of Vallombrosa. There was good eating in the grimy, black shops, where before a huge fire a spit revolved loaded with trussed fowls and haunches of venison; and the pastry-cook's was not to be despised with its deli-

cious scent of spices and warm pasties, just off the hot iron plates, set out in dainty white baskets; its *ciambelli* and *cialdoni*, buns and wafers; the crisp *berlingozzi* that poor Visino thought worth all the kings and queens in Hungary, and those light, golden, sugar-sprinkled pastykins which the Magnificent Lorenzo sang of. These delicacies were not for the apprentices; they brought their own empty flasks and canakins to the wine-shop, to be filled with white Trebbiano; they patronized the pork-butchers buying whole strings of sausages; the poulterers whose neighborhood gave the famous nickname of Pollajuolo, and where one student at least bought the caged wild birds and set them free, while onlookers wondered at the odd caprices of young Leonardo da Vinci.

Wine and bread, onions and sausages once consumed, whether before the shops or on the steps of Santa Maria in Campidoglio, the 'prentices went back to the *bottega*, which was usually in the massive basement of a tall house, fronting some tiny piazza or narrow street. The heavy, iron-barred shutters, which at night closed its four arches, were raised and fastened to the wall, and even the ponderous door stood open, for light was precious to the workers within. The lower half of these arched openings was filled by counters of solid masonry, to which a couple of seats were often

added on the outer side. Within, the furnishing was meagre enough; a few heavy joint stools, hacked by generations of students; a strong box; a delicately wrought pair of bronze scales for weighing pearls, gold, silver, and precious colors; a carved and gilded triptych frame hanging on the wall waiting to be filled with the patron saints of its future purchaser, and on one counter a small anvil, a goldsmith's hammer, graver, and pincers, and a goatskin bellows. A charcoal drawing or two was stuck on the wall; from a peg hung a fine jewelled girdle, and on a bracket over the door were some elaborately chiselled silver trenchers. At the back a door led into the studio, lighted from the next street, where the students worked under the master's supervision, drawing, painting, modelling, and carving.

The life of these art students was divided into three sharply defined stages. The child of eight or ten who was learning the rudiments of the craft was called an apprentice; the youth who aided in the execution of important commissions, an assistant (companion would be the literal translation of the Italian word); and the fully fledged young artist who had begun to fly alone, a *maestro*, or master. The whole training was eminently practical; there were no medals, no exhibitions, no public awards. Now and then there was a

great competition for some important civic monument, like the doors of the Baptistery or the façade of the cathedral, to which not only Italians, but artists from beyond the Alps were invited to send designs; but these were very rare, and by the end of the fifteenth century had practically ceased to exist. There were no academies; no public art schools and no government appropriations for artistic instruction; no official institutions, but the state, while "ignoring art in the abstract, encouraged the individual artist." To produce something which somebody would want to possess, to turn his knowledge of the beautiful, his mastery of technical processes to some concrete end, was the object of the education of the future artist, a work-a-day genius ignorant of our modern formula of art for art's sake. Pietro Vanucci painted the Florentines on altar-curtains, while waiting for the time when, as Perugino, he should work on the walls of the Sistine Chapel; Rodolfo Ghirlandajo "told sad stories of the death of kings" on the baldacchino draperies for All-Souls-Day; and Brunelleschi chased rings and set jewels while dreaming of antique temples and giant domes. Thus were executed not only the master-pieces we admire to-day in the churches and museums of Europe, but a whole series of minor works, which surround the pictures and statues of the Renais-

sance like the fantastical bordering about the illuminated pages of the missal.

Art did not mean the production of pictures and statues only; it meant a practical application of the knowledge of the beautiful to the needs of daily life. So the *bottega* hummed and buzzed with the manifold business of the artist. If orders came in his absence, the apprentices were to accept them all, even those for insignificant trifles; the master would furnish the design, and the pupil would execute, not from greed of gain, as with Perugino, but from the pure joy in creative work which made Ghirlandajo willing to decorate "hoops for women's baskets," and at the same time long for a commission "to paint the whole circuit of all the walls of Florence with stories," and which enabled him, although he died at the age of forty-nine, to leave behind him a second population of Florentines in the choirs and chapels of her churches.

There were constant opportunities for the exercise of this creative faculty. Orders did not cease. Now it was a group of brown Carmelites who called master and men to their church, to be at once scene-setters, costumers, carpenters, and machinists during the Ascension day ceremonies, and for the angel-filled scaffolding from which various sacred personages should mount to heaven. The Abbess of St. Catherine's came in state to order designs for

embroideries to lighten the heavy leisure of the nuns; some wealthy merchant, just made purveyor of Florentine goods to the most Holy Father, would put the papal escutcheon on the cornice of his house, and wished to know what the master might demand for his drawing; what for the *pietra serena* or marble; what for the sculpture, where to the keys and tiara surmounting the arms of Rovere or Medici should be added, as supporters, some device of the painter's invention. Sometimes abbot or prior brought a great order for the decoration of a whole chapel or cloister, and the *bottega* palpitated with expectant enthusiasm, in spite of which the prudent master did not forget to specify in the contract that for the said sum he would furnish the paint, "except the gold and ultramarine," which must be supplied by the monks; for the brethren dearly loved these costly colors, and the painter well knew that without this important clause he should have the prior always at his elbow demanding, "more and more of the blue." Even the imagination of a Pope Julius II., equal to the conception of a St. Peter's and of a mausoleum as big as a church, could not rise above the monastic tradition, and he could say, as he stood for the first time beneath the awful prophets and sibyls of the Sistine Chapel, "I don't see any gold in all this!"

Sometimes there would come an embassy in

gowns of state from some neighboring city, with armed guards and sealed parchments, bringing a commission for the painting of church or town-hall, or a foreign trader from Milan or Genoa would step in to haggle over a portrait. Most welcome was a bridal party, for its manifold needs gave work to the whole studio, even to the ten-year old apprentices in the back shop. "*Chi prende moglie vuol quattrini*" — he who takes a wife needs cash — runs the Florentine proverb, and we do not wonder at it when we realize what a quantity of fine things a bridegroom was expected to supply. There were the dower-chests, carved, gilded, and painted with "Triumphs" of love or chastity; then the shrine, with its picture of Madonna flanked by patron saints, for the bride's chamber, and if the *sposo* was inclined to do things handsomely, the painter could add the portraits of the future husband and wife in the inner side of the gilded shutters; a chased and enamelled holy-water basin, and sprinkler to hang beneath it, of course, and for the tiring mirror, just arrived from Venice, the master must design a silver frame. Then, while our hand was in, why not add a painted frieze of *puttini* on a blue ground to run between the wainscoting and the beamed ceiling? Next (for the list was a long one) came the *damigella's* book of Hours, wherein the tedium of

long prayers was pleasantly enlivened by the contemplation of goodly majuscules and fair miniatures. Important, too, was the plate, no small item in days when a comfit salver or a tankard was signed Verrocchio or Ghiberti. Then, objects of momentous interest and of anxious consultation to the whole party, came the jewels and their settings. The buyers brought the raw material with them, pearls and balas-rubies, the precious convoy of a Venetian galley fresh from the far East; a big turkis engraved with strange characters, torn from the neck of an Algerian pirate by a Genoese sailor, and an antique cameo unearthed in a Roman vineyard only a week before. Each jewel was then examined, weighed, and entered in two account-books, the painter's and the owner's, to prevent any possibility of fraud or mistake.

Afterward ensued a most animated and dramatic discussion of designs, details, and prices, during which artist and customers vied with each other in fine histrionic effects, followed in due time by an amicable settlement and more entries in those "diurnal books" which still exist among the domestic archives of Florentine families to inform posterity how many peacock feathers went to a garland, how many hundredweight of fine pearls to a girdle, and just how many florins, Macigni, Strozzi, or Bardi paid for a buckle or a pouch-clasp.

Strange as such varied orders would appear to a modern artist, they seemed natural enough to the painters and patrons of the Renaissance, to whom art meant, first of all, the embellishment of daily life. In these days of specialists and perfected processes, it is difficult to realize how wide a field was then open to the creative artist, and in how many different directions his personality sought expression. All life was his, and all its forms; nothing was too small or too great, too trivial to be tried, too difficult to be dared; in him the audacity of the revolutionist was united to the infinite patience of the gem-cutter. He attended personally to a thousand details now relegated to trained subordinates. He must answer for his materials, must dabble in the grave art of the apothecaries (that *arte degli speziali e medici* which called Dante member), that the chemicals might be pure for the color his apprentices ground. He must linger in the Pellicceria, or Furriers' Quarter, choosing fair, smooth vellum, and must anxiously test the panel upon which Madonna should appear, lest fine gold and costly ultramarine might be wasted upon unseasoned wood. He must train his model, watch the carving of his picture-frame, and see that the oil was properly clarified. The sculptor went to the quarries to select his blocks of marble, and superintended their removal to the town; he

examined the jewel on which cameo or intaglio was to be cut, and planned the scaffolding for his colossal statues. The architect arranged all the practical details for the execution of his designs, invented machines for raising stones and beams, built the bridges and platforms used by the workmen, was his own foreman and master-builder, and of him it might be truly said, "No stone was laid that he did not wish to see" (*Non sarebbe murata una pietra, che non l' avesse voluta vedere*).

The chisel, the needle, the compass, the burin, the brush, the goldsmith's hammer, the calligraph's pen, even the potter's clay and the mason's trowel were alike familiar to him. He could fill a dusky Gothic chapel with a frescoed paradise, radiant with golden heads and glimmering haloes and the sweep of snowy wings, and fashion a woman's earring; he could design embroidery patterns "in chiaro-oscuro for certain nuns and other people;" and build a bridge over Arno that has stood for five centuries, against storm and flood, even when the river, swollen with rain and laden with wrack, tossed its tawny waves high against the piers and battered them with uprooted trees and clods of earth and broken beams. He could set a great cupola on the cathedral walls, and write abusive sonnets to those who declared he was tempting God by this achievement

he could, on his way to Carrara to select marble for a monument, casually, and as an incident of his errand, survey and build a road over the torrent-beds and sharp spurs of the mountain; he could "cramp his hand to fill his lady's missal marge with flowerets;" he could design a cartoon for the tapestry-weavers, and crowd heaven's glories into a gilded triptych, as well as he could make scaling ladders and "armor warships." He could decorate a dower-chest, and paint a cathedral apse, and chisel a holy-water basin, while fortifying a city; he could write to a Duke of Milan, describing his inventions for war-machines, bombs, and field-pieces; his plans for fortifications, canals, and buildings, adding, as an after-thought, at the end of the list, "in painting also I can do what may be done as well as any, be he who he may."

He could handle a pen as well as a brush, and fill the empty mould of the sonnet with the fiery molten gold of real passion; he could write treatises on art, rich in wise precepts; histories of sculpture in which his own works were not slighted; dissertations on domestic economy and world-famous lives of fellow-craftsmen. Using the style like a chisel, carving character in broad, virile strokes, moulding colloquial Italian like wax, he could cast in the furnace of his own fierce nature an unequalled full-length portrait of the man of

the Renaissance, in "the best of modern autobiographies."

He could make scientific discoveries, solve mathematical problems, embroider an altar-cloth, invent costumes for a masque, summon the gods of Olympus to the magic circle of the seal ring, engrave buttons in niello, illustrate Dante's Paradise and Petrarch's Triumphs, design moulds for jellies and confections, model statuettes in sugar paste, and make of a banquet as rich a feast for the eye as for the palate. He could inlay a corselet, paint a banner for a procession with rose-crowned, peacock-winged angels and gaunt patron saints, or cast a huge church bell girdled with many patternings and Gothic letters which still tell us "Franciscus Fiorentinus me fecit;" he could paint and glaze a sweet water jar, or a cool-toned pavement, or a shrine where, under heavy garlands, the cherubs clustered close like doves in the shelter of the eaves, around some sweet-faced saint.

And in these myriad forms of loveliness he could immortalize his native town; freely as he scattered his riches over Italy, it was for Florence that he reserved his most precious gifts; it is to him, the greatest of her sons, that she owes her proud title of "The Beautiful." During long centuries of shame, when the foreign yoke lay heavy on her neck, the dead artists still served her; she

hid her misery and degradation under the splendid mantle of their consummate achievements, which still sanctifies her and will make her a place of pilgrimage as long as art has a single votary.

For creeds decay, and scholarship grows musty, and the wisdom of one century is the foolishness of the next, but beauty endures forever. A sceptical age smiles at the bigotry which condemned Matteo Palmieri's picture, and yet is charmed by the melancholy and mannered graces of Botticelli; the scholar shudders at the barbarisms of the famous humanists, but the sculptor still takes off his cap to Donatello; the mysticism of the Divine Comedy rings strangely hollow on a modern ear, but have the Night and Morning of Michelangelo no meaning for us? The scientist of to-day looks with reverent pity at Galileo's rude telescope, but the architect counts Brunelleschi's dome among the miracles of his art. Leonardo's fortifications have crumbled away; his inventions are superseded; only the drawings remain of the famous flying machine, but La Gioconda's mysterious smile has not ceased to fascinate an older world.

# IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

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In the history of the arts and letters two cities have been leaders of nations, Athens and Florence, and two fountain-heads, the Ilyssus and the Arno, have poured their waters into the fields of the world. Ancient Athens is a ruin, but to-day the little city of Florence holds the thoughtful as does no other, even in Italy. It is not the past alone which makes it interesting; it is the fact that there we have the printed page and the record in stone side by side, that there more than anywhere else the historic souvenir stands visible and tangible.

In Egypt the temples rise from the sands that have covered the life of the people, and in Rome the skeleton of the antique world stands bare and gaunt upon a soil which is itself the dust of bygone civilizations; but in Florence the same walls which to-day resound to the traffic of the towns-people, and the polyglot enthusiasm of the tourists, echoed the talk of Dante and Guido Cavalcante; the arches that reverberate the loiterer's mandolin gave back the music of Squacialupi and the songs of Lorenzo the Magnificent as he "roamed the town o' nights" with his companions. The same windows which

see the English or American families starting with their little red books to do the city, saw the hooded Michelangelo stepping from his house in the Via Ghibellina, bending over the staff kept there to this day, and turning his face toward San Lorenzo, where his giants lay waiting for him to free them from their marble prison.

Paris has levelled her mediæval streets to build wide boulevards, and London's commerce has overlaid the ancient city; but in Florence you may go with Michelangelo to San Lorenzo by the self-same streets and turnings; you may follow the crowd trooping to hear Savonarola in the Duomo; may pass the shops where immortal painters worked, and stand before shrines at street-corners famous in Florentine romance, where you walk hand in hand with Boccaccio and Sacchetti as easily as with Baedeker and Murray. Against the wall at your elbow the shoulders of some Ghibelline have been set hard, the stones rubbed by his mailed shirt. The great dint in the stone was made by the missile whirled from a mangonel upon some tower that still rises brown and solid as ever. "Magnificently stern and sombre are the streets of beautiful Florence," said Dickens, and hardly anyone has said better; but if her beauty be somewhat high and frowning, it lives with us the longer, and all about her she wears a garland of olive, well

fitted to the city which opened the path of modern thought.

The foreigners have loved Florence so much as to make her half their own. To the Tuscan the *forestieri* are as familiar as the Bargello itself, and it is no mean proof of the dignity and beauty of the city that the inevitable fringe of frippery which hangs upon the skirts of a tourist invasion cannot belittle her.

But it is not all frippery. No city has been more admirably photographed than Florence. The Tuscans are a reading people, or at any rate there are shops full of books, while Vieusseux's noble circulating library has hardly its equal. In it are histories of Florence, big and little, by famous men of bygone centuries whose memorial tablets shine upon the city walls to-day: the Villani, whose house is in the Via de' Giraldi by the Bargello; Macchiavelli and Guicciardini, whose names you may see near the Pitti palace; Varchi and Nardi and many others; historians, partial and impartial, Piagnoni and Medicean.

But to those *forestieri* who speak our English language, no book in the long line has the fascination of the "Romola" of George Eliot. As in the words of Nello, Romola seems the lily of Florence incarnate against the brown background of the old city. Florence seems more familiar and akin to us

because we can follow her footsteps about it, and see her between the great reformer and the Judas who betrayed them both, and attended by a whole Shakespearian train, — Nello, the barber; Bratti, the iron-monger; Brigida, the dear old simpleton; Tessa, the little sleepy, loving animal, and many others interwoven upon a background of the life and thought of the time.

A whole panorama is unrolled for us, made living by characters, some historic, some fictitious, but all penetrated with the spirit of the fifteenth century, and moving upon the great currents of the age, — the desire for civic autonomy, the striving for reform, and the passionate enthusiasm for the resurgent culture of antiquity. We listen to Savonarola in the Duomo and to Capponi, speaking for liberty in the palace of the Via Larga. The life of the scholars passes before us in the intense earnestness of old Bardo, or the witty trifling of the Medicean plotters in the Rucellai gardens, and exhibits one of its most characteristic sides in the sayings of the brilliant smatterer, Nello. People famous in history meet us; some, like Piero di Cosimo, to take part in the story, others only to appear and disappear. Artists greet us for a moment, — wild young Mariotto Albertinelli, with his model, emerges into the light of festival-lamps upon the Annunziata place; his beloved friend, Fra Bartolommeo, stands in the glow

of the bonfire of vanities with Cronaca and Sandro Botticelli; young Niccolo Macchiavelli talks to us as only George Eliot could make him talk. Charles VIII. of France, whose almost monstrous face we find to-day in a terra-cotta of the Bargello, passes, — we see the slit of a mouth, and the "miserable leg" upon the housings of gold, and the expedition of the king to Naples, so heavy with consequences to Italy and the world, becomes an important factor in the story. We listen to the inevitable opponents of Savonarola and reform: the artistic opponents, who sighed over the Boccaccios that burned upon the bonfire; the brutal opponents, in Dolfo Spini's *compagnacci* and their hatred of all decency; the foolish opponents, in Monna Brigida's thankfulness that the reformer had "not quite turned the world upside down," since "there were jellies with the arms of the Albizzi and Acciajoli on them" at the Acciajoli wedding-feast. We stand upon the cathedral square — Piagnoni at heart, every one of us — through the author's wonderful chapter upon the trial by fire. We starve with the city in its misfortunes, and rejoice in its success; we see the people of the frescoes, and we hear the bells of Florence.

Every visitor to Italy carries away at least a general impression of the city. It is an impression of brown, old stone, of narrow streets, of enormously

wide eaves, as if the palaces were shading their window-eyes from the dazzling light; of sidewalkless streets, with polygonal blocks of pavement, like an Etruscan wall laid flat; of fortifications and battlements, seen overhead; of massive gratings at windows that show the pediments of the Renaissance; of still heavier ones, at those of the Gothic times; of escutcheons at palace-angles; of projections corbelled out, throwing deep shadows and suggesting machicolations through which were dropped stones and beams in the days of street-battle; of shrines at corners, glassed and dusty now, but out of which the long-eyed saints of the fourteenth century look, wondering that the war-cries are gone and that only the street-cries remain; of shadowed streets, and at some opening a burst of sunlit façade of that checkered pattern, in black and white, so dear to mediæval Florentine eyes, while often and again, in semicircle of white and blue, Madonna with the baby, "ringed by a bowery, flowery angel brood," smiles upon one and says that if war is transitory, beauty is immortal.

Above all, one carries away in his memory the image of those buildings which are the outgrowth of the city, her stamp and mark, inseparable from her as the Arno, and as familiar to the eyes of modern travel as was the lily on the florin to the merchants upon every mediæval 'change of Europe. They

stand guard over the town like the stone saints at the doorway of a church: the Cathedral, a huge Christopher, lifting the cross upon the greatest of all domes; the fair Campanile, like a Gabriel of the Annunciation, wearing the lily of Florence, and calling "Ave Maria" from its peal of bells; and the Palazzo Vecchio, the Michael of the city, bearing the shields of the republic, summoning the townsmen to arms, and giving voice to the will of the people. Then, too, there are San Giovanni, where the Florentines are baptized, and Santa Croce, where the great are buried; the square strength of the Bargello and the slender Badia tower that rings the hour to the city.

All these make up Florence, and nearly all can be included within a small rectangle bounded on the south by the river, on the east by the Via dei Leoni and Via del Proconsolo running from the Arno to the Cathedral; the latter, with its vast length, and the Baptistery to the west of it, making a large part of the northern boundary, which is continued by the Via de' Cerretani to the western side, formed by the Via de' Rondinelli, Piazza degli Adimari, and Via Tornabuoni. Outside the rectangle historic quarters surround the great churches of Santa Croce on the northeast; San Lorenzo, the Annunziata, and San Marco, on the north; and Santa Maria Novella on the northwest. Besides

these, there is that part of Oltr'arno including the Via dei Bardi.

Within these limits, or nearly, the story of Romola runs, and about this little space you may follow it, not in its details, — since it returns frequently to the same places, — but in its main lines. You may wake up with Tito under the Loggia de' Cerchi and follow him to the Mercato, where he found the people anxiously commenting upon the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. The house of Romola's father in the Via dei Bardi may epitomize the life of the scholar, the festival of the nativity of Saint John give a glimpse of the artist, and with the scholar and the artist we have the great figures of the Renaissance, — the humanist who, from the heritage of antiquity, set forth again the inward worthiness and free agency of man, and the painter and sculptor who once more gave expression to his outward beauty. The scholars and artists of Florence may thus stand as sponsors for the Titos and Tessas, the Brattis and Nellos, and show us the palaces in which the people of "Romola" lived, the people themselves, as they were painted upon church-wall or carved on marble monuments. In the latter half of the story the interest and, with it, the train of characters converge upon the monastery of San Marco and the Piazza della Signoria, where the fortunes of the state work themselves out and the hopes of

Romola are shattered. The monks of to-day, however shorn of their old importance, take us into famous churches, and we may see the relics of Savonarola and follow his footsteps to the great square of the Palazzo Vecchio, where the story ends.

After the noble prologue, the book opens upon Tito awakening to the inquiring eyes of Bratti, the ironmonger, from his sleep under the Loggia dei Cerchi. The loggia is gone; but its place was in the heart of the city, where the high houses crowd together, and where the memorial tablets to the great departed speak of many who had gone from Florence before Tito's time, and of many who came after him. It is a busy quarter of narrow streets, where the procession had to close its ranks, and where Guelph or Ghibelline found a short chain quite long enough to link house to house and stop the oncoming horse or foot of the enemy. A roaring quarter it is where Dante heard the shouts of battle, and where Tito, had he listened, could have recognized the whole fugue of the arts of Florence, those famous *arti*, major and minor, — the shuttles of the woollen-makers, the chisels of the sculptors, the pounding of the metal-workers in the Ferravecchi street, the clicking hammers of the goldsmiths, and the cleavers of the butchers, their predecessors upon the Ponte Vecchio.

Only a few steps beyond the loggia lies the Mer-

cato Vecchio, that famous square which is still picturesque and busy (1887). The municipal broom has swept away the butchers' and poulterers' stalls, and much of that rather Augean market which old Pucci sang, and municipal prudence has housed in a museum the Robbia angels, that used to shine whitely over all the blood and dirt and confusion.

The Goddess of Plenty only a few years ago still stood there, high on her column, a kind of Santa Barbara to the tower of Or San Michele. For in early times, when the microcosmic republic not only furnished manufactures to the world, but made its own bread to feed its own soldiers, the captains of Or San Michele mounted the tower yearly and, looking out upon the fields, decided by their appearance what should be the current price of wheat. The goddess is gone, column and all, but plenty still reigns below in the market — and what a place it is! A wide rectangle, its centre unpaved; the houses, tall and short, crowded with windows, and below, about three sides of the piazza, a noisy, smoking, unfragrant medley of shops; a constant push and shouting; a crossing of handcarts; a fizzing of spiders as the fat drips from *polenta* browning nicely and eaten hot, a crackling of charcoal under the chestnut braziers and open-air cooking of every sort and kind. If Tito, after his nap, had found but a *grosso* or so in his pocket, he would have taken

pretty Tessa's kiss and cup of milk as dessert and gone for his meal to one of those tempting *al fresco* cook-shops, with its large, clear fire, its rows of neatly dressed fowls and joints turning on their spits, the hot cakes of chestnut-flour and crisp slices of *polenta* fizzling in their pans, and its brass platters and porringers engraved with quaint old patterns, gleaming in the firelight. Here Tessa might find her *berlingozzi* to-day or Baldassarre his bread and meat; and we may see their modern counterparts — shabby men in long cloaks and slouched felt hats, pretty girls in serge dresses and gay headkerchiefs — see them best of all after nightfall, when the brazier-fires seem to leap up higher and make wild Rembrandt effects upon the faces of Bersaglieri munching *polenta* under their waving cocks' feathers, or brown peasants looking curiously at the rude woodcuts heading the penny ballads that line the walls. There is less "amateur fighting" on the square than in the old times, less filching from stalls, less gambling, for that is done decorously in the state lotteries. Of four churches at the angles, but two subsist in dirty, crazy fragments, and, indeed, there is perhaps less work for the devil whom Saint Peter Martyr saw fly by, as he preached in the open-air pulpit still remaining. The devil remains, too, for many years later a young French artist whom Florentines afterward learned to know as

John of Bologna, visited his friends and patrons, the Vecchietti, near by, and catching the devil, fixed him to the angle of the palace, a grotesque, decorative little monster, for tourists to visit and Accarisi to copy on spoon-handles.

There are booths of every sort, full of gay goods; shawls, red, blue, and apricot, the joy of modern Tessas; booths full of animals, too; here is a boy dragging hens from a basket, — one squeak, two squeaks, a whole demoniac panpipe of terror, till half a dozen hang downward by their legs. A little farther on, the parrots, in full consciousness of ornamental security, are shrieking what we feel sure are scurril taunts at the hens; upon the shop-front are scores of wicker cages, their canaries filling high soprano parts in the chorus of the Mercato, while the thrash of a machine, hidden somewhere, adds to the noise till the big bell of the Campanile booms a diapason. You find Bratti at home just beyond the bird-shop, where the street of the Ferravecchi bristles with old iron. There are chains, bits of harness, copper braziers in whole families of big and little; here and there among the metal are old musical instruments, battered fiddles, a flute or so, and slender, verdigrised brass lamps.

The Medici lived hard by here before they outgrew their house and set Michelozzo to work upon the palace of the Via Larga. Their noses were not

nice; one might be of the Grandi, and yet like a leek and rather enjoy the fish-market at the corner, whose loggia, with its arches, columns, and medallions, is a new-comer since the days of Bratti. And the Medici were not alone in the quarter: the Amieri were near them, and the Strozzi, surely as grandly housed as ever were private citizens, had built their huge palace here, with its back upon the "Onion Place," the Piazza dei Cipolli. Its bases are lined with the long stone seats so well known in Florence, so convenient for the sturdy constituents of the old nobles to stand upon of a *festa* to see the procession go by, to sit on of week-days, selling their onions and their spring flowers side by side.

Not far from the Mercato, in the Calimara, was the shop of Burchiello, that Renaissance Figaro of Florence, antecedent to the delightful character of Nello, the barber. It was Nello's shop that next received Tito and the story, and Tito looked out over the barber's saucer and apron at nearly what we see to-day. Some changes there have been, for Florence has worked hard at the façade of her cathedral, unveiling it this year, — some changes, but not many. The stone of Dante has been piously built into the wall, while Lapo and Brunelleschi are put on either side of it to watch their work. But the fair tower is the same; "*il mio bel San Giovanni*" is *bello* still, even beside its later and greater rival. The mighty

dome rises as grand as when Michelangelo, his horse's head turned toward Rome, looked back at it from the hills, and avowed that he could do no better, grand under the sunlight, under the starlight; grand when, on some high festival, covered with lighted lamps, it sits like a jewelled mitre upon the city, and grandest of all, perhaps, under the Italian moon.

It was from the shop of Nello that Tito went with his Figaro patron to the house of old Bardo, in Oltr'arno.

The Via dei Bardi is still one of the most characteristic parts of the city. The houses of the Bardi are gone, but many such of the early times, those which must have immediately taken their place, remain. Among the frowning streets of Florence it is one of the sternest, chill and windswept: a long fortress, easily defended at its ends in the days when the great family, unaided, could send from its houses pikemen to hold the chain barricades of the Ponte Vecchio and the Piazza Mozzi; cross-bowmen to send their bolts whizzing from back windows into the enemy upon the bridges; artillerymen to work the mangonels upon the tower-tops, to fling great stones over Santa Felicità and up the Borgo San Jacopo, or even across the river to the heart of the republican city, the square of the Palazzo Vecchio. Not only could they fur-

nish all these and officer them with sons and brothers and cousins, but they had their allies, too. There were the Rossi, by the little church of Santa Felicità, and the Frescobaldi, to hold the bridge of the most holy Trinity. The bridge of the Frescobaldi has gone down in ruin before floods fiercer than these faction struggles, and has been replaced by the graceful arches of Ammanati, but the Ponte Vecchio, which saw the gonfalons of the quarters — the dove and the sun, the baptistery and the cross — beaten back by the Bardi, but finally triumphant, stands the same as ever, and says as steadfastly, "*Gaddi mi fece, il Ponte Vecchio sono*," as in the days when the great Taddeo set its buttresses against the current.

To-day there are parts of the Via dei Bardi where one may stand and not see, within the gentle curve that bounds the vision, a single stone which tells of modern times or anything but arched windows, jealous gratings, and thick oak doors, heavy with the mass of spikes that stud them — a stern, forbidding street, but with the beauty of dignity, simplicity, and strength. There is little traffic there now; occasionally some fine carriage wakens the echoes of the deep archways as it goes by to the palace of the Capponi, whose name, great as that of the Bardi, illustrates the place still. The street which was "the filthy," the Via Pidigliosa, before the nobles

built their palaces there, can never be even commonplace again. And, stern as it is, romance looks down on one from the loggia whence Dianora dei Bardi saw and claimed her husband as they led him to execution, saving his life and the honor of the Buondelmonti. Robbia's Madonna, too, blossoms like a flower among the dark palaces, above the door of little Santa Lucia, the church in which Romola would have been married had not blind Bardo's memories and anticipations beckoned him to Santa Croce, where he had been wedded, and where he hoped to lie buried.

Midway of the Via dei Bardi a path leads sharply to the right, up the hill of San Giorgio, where Tessa lived, and finally to the mediæval gate, with its frescoes and its sculptured St. George. Beyond it opens the pleasant country, and at the side is the fortress where, in blue woollen and lacquer and pipe-clay, some thousand defenders of the modern Tessas of Florence may be seen.

From the crashing palaces of the Oltr'arno nobles, the cross-bolts and hurtling-stones of the battle of the bridges, to the wordy combats, the poison-tipped epigrams, the ponderously flung Latin taunts of the humanists, is as far as from the early fourteenth to the late fifteenth century; but topographically it is no farther than a ten minutes' walk from the Via dei Bardi to the palace of the Gherardeschi,

in the Borgo Pinti, where a tablet to Bartolommeo Scala reminds us less of the secretary of the republic than of the scene of the *culex* in "Romola," the suggestion of his quarrels with Politian.

It is, however, in the house of Romola's father that we are really made to participate in the enthusiasms of the man of letters. Bardo dei Bardi, the blind old scholar, the collector of books and antiquities, the compiler and copyist of manuscripts, is a familiar figure in the Italy of the fifteenth century, the age of learning.

When Bardo planned the great work that he and Tito were to write together, the first epoch of humanism, that of discovery, had passed away, and the second, that of compilation, had begun. In both Florence had been in the vanguard. She had welcomed the Greek professors from Byzantium, who came rouged and painted, and clad in stiff, hieratic robes, like the saints who stare down in mosaic from the walls of Ravenna. She had her own noble army of scholars: Boccaccio, Petrarch, whose mother was born in this Via dei Bardi; Poggio Fiorentino, who ransacked the transalpine monasteries for books, and found many an old Pagan author masquerading under frock and cowl, and others, too, who might say with Ciriaco, "I go to awaken the dead." And the dead was awakened. Antiquity rose to life again, wearing

a strange garb, and with her simple, white chiton pieced with bits of mediæval motley and bespangled with Byzantine tinsel; speaking a strange jargon of corrupt Greek and barbarous Latin, but ragged and stammering as she was, there was so much human dignity and so much divine beauty about her that no sooner was she seen than the new Helena won the heart of the mediæval student. A very Helena she was at first, seen dimly, as in a magic mirror; mute or capricious to those who sought most earnestly to learn her secrets; prone to evil, with a "feather-headed" moral lightness that frightened the devout, or so she seemed in the dim light of the convent library, but when brought into the Italian sunshine, the daylight of market-place and lecture-room, she lost this mysterious glamour, and gained in the losing.

All Florence welcomed her. The shop-keeping republic patronized learning more generously than king or pope: professors' chairs were endowed, libraries founded, and famous scholars employed as ambassadors and secretaries. In Florence, scholarship was not a mere ornamental fringe to the sober garment of daily duties; it was warp and woof of that garment, a part of life itself. Young girls, busy merchants, men of pleasure, captains of adventure, women of fashion, shared the enthusiasm for learning, and it is difficult nowadays to realize how

important the scholar's place became under such conditions. Women had their part in this feast of reason; Romola's education by Chalcondilas, her familiarity with Latin and Greek authors, was not uncommon. Italy abounded in learned ladies; princesses like Hippolita Sforza or Battista Montefeltro, who addressed Latin orations to popes and emperors; noble women who, like Cecilia Gonzaga, wrote Greek beautifully; female professors who filled many of the chairs of the Bolognese university; burghers' daughters, like Alessandra Scala, to whom Politian and Marullus paid court, and that Cassandra Fedeli, to whom Romola intended to apply when she left Florence after Tito's first treason. For humanism was not only an accomplishment, it was a career; in order to follow an ordinary conversation a certain modicum of culture was required, and a woman was obliged at least to read, the result being a certain robustness of intellect, which is so strong an element in Romola's character.

Save in his generous temper, Bardo is a typical scholar, with the maxims of the "Enchiridion" on his lips and an intense craving for fame in his heart; too proud to cringe and flatter, too noble to fawn for patronage and to pay its heavy price, and yet not proud enough to disdain what others gained through the sacrifice of their independence, and

too often of their self-respect. But Bardo's wish that through his collections his name should be known and honored was not unreasonable in an age that reverenced the tomb of Petrarch like that of a saint, that preserved the study of Accursius as though it were holy ground, and in which some enthusiast, taking the lamp from below the crucifix and placing it before a bust of Dante, exclaimed, "Take it; thou art more worthy of it than the Crucified!"

Modern Italy is at present quite too busy with financial and economic problems to be enthusiastic about literature, but we can still hear lectures on Dante in the Florentine Collegio Reale, and see students almost as picturesquely cloaked as in the old days when Boccaccio discoursed in San Stefano on the same subject. A few years ago a lineal descendant of the great scholars might be seen in the person of the Marchese Gino Capponi, author of the well-known history of Florence.

From the scholar's library, in which antiquity was diligently studied in manuscript and inscription, the story leads Tito to one of those street processions which, partly religious, partly civic, were also largely, in their costume and arrangement, the outcome of these very excursions into the ancient authors, and no picture of Italian life in the fifteenth century would have been complete without

the suggestion which George Eliot gives of the festival of Saint John's nativity. He is a famous saint in Florence, and his is the oldest church, the Baptistery, already old in the thirteenth century, when Arnolfo covered it with the black-and-white pattern which we see there now, and which must have been still tolerably fresh when Nello's barber-shop stood near it. Neither the wide interior of the Duomo nor the many-chapelled Santa Croce is as solemn as the incense-filled space of San Giovanni, whose domed ceiling, as the eyes strain through the darkness, gradually grows populous with a multitude, amidst which the face of the colossal Christ looks out and seems to vibrate upon the colored gloom. The church is so old that it is quite doubtful whether the Romans did or did not found it, and its pavement has been trod by generations of famous Florentines and by famous guests of Florence, kings and emperors from the north, weavers of Lucca learning those same pavement patterns by heart for their webs, and tourist invaders with their guide-books. The saint is popular outside of his church, too; you find him on all sides. The young Saint John is the darling of the Robbia and of the angel painters, the Lippi and Botticelli. Rossellino has set him up in marble, a tottering baby, over the door of the Opera del Battistero; and he is the beloved of Donatello, who "did" him again and

again as an adolescent with thin cheeks and wide eyes standing to-day among the sturdy Davids and Cupids of the Bargello. The John Baptist of the procession was, as George Eliot tells us, no such lovely boy, but a rough *contadino*, glad of his basket of bread and wine, which was let down to him from a house on the square of tiny Santa Maria del Campo still standing halfway along the Proconsolo Street. Every city in Italy had, if not its Saint John's feast, some other, but the Florentines led as in other directions, for with their "Orfeo" of Politian, their music of Squarcialupi, their garden concerts with recitations, they were preparing the way for the opera and the modern theatre.

The popularity of pageants in the churches and streets was immense. After the allegories of Dante, the "Triumphs" of Love and Fame and Chastity of Petrarch, the greatest artists could not disdain the setting and even the stage-carpentry of the pompous ballet-spectacles in which kings of Scripture, heroes of antiquity, the virtues and vices, elements and attributes, marched and countermarched through the cities of Italy. In the mysteries of the North the missal borders of the middle ages had come to life, with all their soldiers and saints, their devils and dragons; but the Italians, that people of artists, added the myths of classical antiquity and interwove their Bible with Ovid. Brunelleschi set

his copper spheres a-whirling and invented his heaven of angels dancing in concentric rings, his Gabriel lowered by pulleys from a star; Donatello built his colossal wooden horse for a Paduan pageant, and Leonardo da Vinci superintended the festivals at Milan.

The charming half-feminine soldier-saints and heroes of Perugino in the Sala del Cambio of his native city might be seen in their fantastic feathers, their semi-Roman costumes, upon the squares of Perugia, in moralities and plays. The women of Botticelli and Pollajuolo who with corseleted breasts and drawn swords sit as Fortitude and Justice in the Uffizi, passed throned upon the processional chariots of Cecca. Mantegna's slender nymphs filled the car of Venus, while the Theology and Jurisprudence of Raphael's Vatican ceiling were not wanting.

The Florentines made a profession of organizing festivals, and went about Italy as *impresari;* while the whole youth of the country, men and women, took various parts, from merely walking in gay procession, as in the painting of the Adimari marriage on the famous dower chest, to filling the most eccentric rôles. They sat on the tops of high columns, stood whitened as statues in niches, or even descended perilously upon a rope from some church façade; while every writer tells of those historic

little boys who were gilded all over, and who are variously stated to have died from the effect of. and not to have been injured at all by, the gold leaf. The *naïf* simplicity of the early mysteries played on a platform in church or refectory must have embodied much that was lovely; but as the morality grew into favor, the personifications of various attributes became more and more enigmatical, till the plays were perambulating puzzles, set in accordance with the overloaded fashions of the North. In Italy culture had permeated a deeper and wider stratum. The antique was already a tradition, and men knew their Dante and Petrarch, Boiardo and Pulci, by heart. Excrescences were pruned away; mere richness gave place to form and taste. The pompous prosing Victor Hugo presents so vividly in the beginning of his "*Notre Dame de Paris*" was succeeded by epigrammatic verse or even the fine poetry of Politian. Doubtless there lingered some absurdities in these pageants, as when tumblers and weight-lifters were seen at the same time with the angels, or a ballet issued from the sides of a golden wolf at Siena; indeed, Donatello's wooden horse of Padua and Leonardo's equestrian statue of Ludovico Sforza, performing mechanical evolutions at a festival, partook of the same exaggerated taste. But we may be sure that the pictures were fine when Brunelleschi and Da Vinci stood by; and if the painters

costumed and set the spectacles, the spectacles in their turn reacted upon the painter's art.

Imagine how ardently Mantegna and Filippino Lippi would have worked at the arrangement of a procession; how Filippino would have expended upon it the vivid fancy which Vasari tells us of, and which he showed in the curiously devised trophies, standards, and pseudo-Roman architecture of the Strozzi chapel in Santa Maria Novella. If Ghirlandajo looked hard at the Florentines when about their daily vocations, Sandro Botticelli was all eyes as the car of the Virtues passed, and we can well believe that the pretty girls of the city vied with each other to be chosen for this or that personification. We see the sublimated reflection of these spectacles on many a canvas or bas-relief of the fifteenth century: in Botticelli's exquisite "Primavera;" in Mantegna's "Triumph of Cæsar" at Hampton Court; in the singing groups of Della Robbia; the intertwined boys of the pulpit at Prato, and the panels, pilasters, and friezes of the Renaissance. So great was the passion for spectacles that Savonarola was forced to adapt it to the uses of his theocracy; and in speaking to the multitude from the pulpit of the Duomo, he clothed his vision of Christ in the forms which the people had seen and understood in the processions and pageants of the streets. Perhaps, too, the great monk never entirely forgot

the days when he laid down the lute in his native Ferrara, the city of festivals.

Peculiarly famous in the arrangement of pageants was that Piero di Cosimo who represents the artistic side in Romola, and who evidently was chosen by George Eliot for his strong personality rather than for his place in Italian art.

Far inferior in technique to most of his fellows, his eccentricities, as has been the case with some other painters, gave him more fame than his talent. Vasari's sketch of his life reads like a character study, and George Eliot closely followed his lines. A few souvenirs of the old painter are still to be found in Florence; the old Via Gualfonda, then in the most lonely part of the town, is now one of the great arteries of modern Florence, running from the piazza of Italian independence to the avenue of Filippo Strozzi, behind the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella, past the railway-station. Here the painter shut himself up in his studio, living on hard-boiled eggs, which, to save time and firing, he would cook by fifties and hundreds; never allowing his rooms to be cleaned or his garden pruned; saying that such things were much better left to nature; stuffing his ears with wool to drown the sound of the bells, the voices of the street, and even the distant chanting of the monks, and "living the life of a wild beast rather than a man."

A painter of lively fancy rather than imaginative power, with more love of the grotesque than the beautiful, he studied the caprices of nature. The forms of strange plants and animals; the fantastic shapes of the clouds, and even the mildew stains upon old walls, delighted him, "and he would describe them so frequently that even to persons who could take pleasure in such narratives, the relation at length became tedious and tiresome." This is a significant sentence when we remember that Vasari's authority was his own master, Andrea del Sarto, a pupil of Piero. Readers of "Romola" will remember the sketches of loves playing with armor, the white rabbit that twitched its nose contentedly over a box of bran, and the tame pigeons that Tito saw in the old man's den, and they can still be seen in the picture of "Mars and Venus" in the Nerli Palace.

The Piero of the novel is a type as well as a personality, a type of the artistic nature that found the pageantry and color of Lorenzo's time more attractive than the severity of a Savonarola. Piero's dislike of Savonarola was that of a great many people not of the Dolfo Spini sort, who, looking only at the surface of things, preferred a prince who made life very pleasant for the few, rather than the priest who would make it tolerable to the many. Piero, whose business was to look at the

surface of things, naturally hated a man who wanted "to burn all the color out of life;" "to make every woman a black patch against the sky," and to do away with the gold brocades and velvet mantles, the *giostre* and *cavalcate*, which paint so magnificently. Van Dyck could hardly be expected to sympathize with the Puritans, and an enlightened and art-loving tyrant is a better patron than a capricious republic. There were Piagnoni painters, men who saw the surface of things, or at least could render it on canvas far better than Piero, who at the same time could see somewhat below that same superficies, and long for beauty of a more immaterial and nobler sort, like Botticelli and the young Michelangelo, but Piero was not of their ilk.

The famous families of Florence were long-lived. To-day in the Martelli Palace you visit the statues which Donatello gave to a Martelli of the fifteenth century; it is by the courtesy of a Buonarotti that the relics in the house of Michelangelo are shown; the Strozzi, the Pazzi, and many others are seen daily about the streets of the city; and in Santa Croce, the tomb of a Capponi — a Gino Capponi, like his great ancestor — is white and shining in the marble of a recent date.

The private palaces of Florence are as characteristic as its public buildings. They are the outcome

of civil strife, and through all the elegance of the Renaissance appears the fortress. Within the windows are the gratings that made scaling-ladders useless; below are doors which little save fire or a battering-ram could force, and above is the loggia, raised upon the house-top, beyond the chances of street-battle. They are such houses as the one Romola lived in; without they suggest the fortress, and within they smack of the cloister, with their long passages, tiled floors, frequent stairs, and wide, frescoed wall-spaces.

The tall towers are gone from these private palaces. A fiat, issuing like a mediæval Tarquin from the Signoria, lopped them to an even level in the thirteenth century; but the escutcheon, carved by some famous artist, still advertises the nobility of the former owner, who is often seen within, kneeling before Madonna upon a gold ground; his palms joined, and his subtle Florentine profile upturned with reverential if somewhat proprietary interest. In the Borgo degli Albizzi the palaces stand shoulder to shoulder, Neri and Pazzi, Alessandri and Quaratesi; for half the streets of Florence are named for the great families. They have held history and romance, tragedies of blows in the earlier centuries, of poison in the later, and have sheltered the kindly family life Pandolfini tells of in his "Del Governo."

The finest palace streets of Florence are the Borgo degli Albizzi and the Via Tornabuoni. The Borgo almost retains its old appearance, but the Tornabuoni has been given up to the foreigner, especially to the English or American visitor. Thither he goes for his letters and his money; there he reads the papers at Vieusseux's, or loiters in Doney's café; there, in the shadow of the stern-looking palace, designed by Michelangelo, he may buy photographs of everything, big or little, in Florence; there the tourists sit and study their guide-books, in Baccio d'Agnolo's windows of the Hôtel du Nord. It is the oddest mixture in the city of the old and the new. Before the huge Strozzi, and opposite the flower-market, at Giacosa's, the American and English girls eat candy or sweets, according to their nationality; or just beyond, under Alfieri's house, look into the windows of the jewellers' shops, discussing whether the devil of the Mercato Vecchio or the St. George of Donatello is better upon a spoon-handle; whether a bearded head or an athlete will please the longer upon an intaglio or cameo; whether photographs are better mounted upon tinted paper or white; in fact, discussing the thousand delightful trifles of foreign travel, and of present-buying for those at home.

Not a few Americans have had close acquaintance with the house in which George Eliot passed the

days when she was acquiring that exact knowledge of Florentine topography which helps to make her book so real. This was the villa of Mr. Thomas Adolphus Trollope, which stood well out in the country, but since then Florence has grown; it is now within the city, and has become a *pension.* It is a privilege to remember it as it was, with its wealth of carving and Venetian glass, and its fine oak-floored and leather-covered library, where the genial old author proudly dragged from his shelves folio after folio of the early Florentine historians, manuscript and black-letter, and showed them by the light of a stained-glass casement, which filled the whole end of the room and framed Fiesole with its rocks, its olives, and its towers.

If the palaces of the old Florentines are to be found on all sides, so, too, their ancient inhabitants stand ready to receive us, if we will but go to them. Thanks to the painters, the costume of the end of the fifteenth century can be reconstructed even to its smallest details, and we know just how Tito looked when he thrust his thumbs into his belt or cast the *becchetto* over his left shoulder, and can find all Brigida's finery, from her pearl-embroidered cap to her coral rosary, in many a blackened picture. For even if costume was idealized and ennobled by the artists under the influence of classical antiquity, the innumerable portraits of the time represent it

as it was worn in daily life. The young Florentines might clothe themselves in Mantegna's or Gozzoli's draperies for a May-day festival or procession, but when they sat to Ghirlandajo or Botticelli for their portraits, they wore the mantle and kirtle or the doublet and hose of the latest mode.

The most marked characteristics of this costume are simplicity of line, unity of color, and sobriety of ornament. Florentine elegance always had a touch of severity. The silk brocades made in the town, and sent to France and England, were seldom seen at home. Except on festival days, the Florentines wore their own woollen stuffs from the shops of the Calimala. The general form of these garments is familiar to us all: the fine-linen underwear, showing at wrist and throat, or pulled through the slashes at elbow and shoulder; for the young men, the long hose, fastened by points at the waist to the tight-fitting jerkin; the loose doublet, falling halfway to the knee; the ample cloak, still worn in Florence, and the tiny red cap, crowning a mass of fuzzy curls. For the girls there were the close-fitting gowns that revealed every line of the body; the flowing over-robe, shaped like a Greek tunic, sometimes girdled in antique fashion; a chaplet of goldsmith's work or a net of pearls to confine the long hair. For the elder folk there was the stately *lucco* that fell in unbroken folds from neck to

ankle; the great mantle lined with furs or velvet; the *barret* with its hanging scarf, ample protection against the sharp *tramontana* or the hot sun; grand gowns of rich, heavy stuffs and all sorts of head and neck gear, from the transparent gauzes of Fra Lippo's pictures to the thick veils of the Del Sarto Madonnas, all most becoming to elderly faces.

In Italy the old canons of proportion were never quite forgotten. The waist and hips were never compressed, and the head was dressed so as to appear relatively small. The huge head-dresses, the towering horns and peaks, so popular in England and Germany, the pinched waist and squeezed hips of the French *demoiselle* and *châtelaine*, never found favor in Italy. The mantle, the cloak, the flowing veil, were essential parts of an Italian toilet of any epoch, and even in the eighteenth century Venetian women could still be majestic in hoops and panniers.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century the study of antique sculpture, the influence of the artists, the newly awakened sense of æsthetic criticism, began to find expression in costume. The proportions of the human body, the beauty of its movements, the elegance of its natural lines, were again felt, after many centuries, and since the days of *peplos* and *himation* they had not been more fully expressed. Beautiful as the garments of ancient

Greece were, the Florentines were too truly artistic, too thoroughly imbued with the principles of style, to endeavor to imitate them. No doubt artists and patrons looked upon antique drapery as an ideal, but as something quite unsuited to modern conditions, to a cold climate, to the activity of burgher life.

But the youths' doublet and hose, the girls' tight-fitting, square-cut bodice, followed the lines of their young bodies, and the older people wore the long folds and ample draperies that lend grace and dignity to the most uncomely. On the practical character of these costumes, their fitness, their style, in a word, we need not insist. They were as fine in detail as in line. Here, as in every other aspect of Renaissance life, there was much personality; ornament was individual; seals, emblems, arms, devices, the blazons of mediæval heraldry, were still in the immediate past, and to them the artists lent beauty as well. So the girl's favorite flower blossomed unfading in her silver garland; the scholar's pet maxim, from Seneca or Cicero, was embroidered on his pouch or graven on a medallion, and charming trifles lent grace and originality to the simplest dress.

The burgher's suit of plain cloth could not fail of distinction when the medal in his cap was wrought by Pisanello or Finiguerra, its device penned by Politian, and when the seal-ring on his finger was

cut by some famous *intagliatore*, ancient or modern. There were fewer silks and velvets in the brown town than in Venice or Milan. A Florentine never loved a silk *simarre* or a pearl necklace as he did a fine cameo or a good bit of goldsmith's work, but of the latter he showed a generous appreciation. On the girdle, the pouch-clasp, the dagger-hilt, the garland, cunning workmanship and artistic fancy were lavished. Pretty things were not made by the gross then, and each was a separate creation of the artist. The shops of Cennini, the Ghirlandaji, and the Pollajuoli were full of young students capable of giving shape to any number of dainty conceits in gold, silver, or *niello*. The art or trade of the goldsmith was most honorable; it counted among its members the greatest of Florentine artists. Was not Bigordi always the garland-maker, and did not Brunelleschi set jewels before he set the great jewel on the walls of Santa Maria? We can find Tito's dagger, and Romola's golden girdle, and Tessa's silver necklace and clasp, under glass in the museum, and we can see Tito's mail-shirt in the armory of the Bargello; but time, cruel as Savonarola's bonfire, has devoured most of our actors' properties, and only bits and shreds would remain to us if the painters, the Florentine "fifth element," had not preserved them for us, and they show us not only the costumes, but the actors themselves.

At this time the artists were passing through the realistic phase of their art; had abandoned the well-ordered, symmetrically arranged heaven and hell of the Giotteschi, and were carving and painting men and things as they saw them in the every-day world about them. With their help it is an easy task to evoke the past: every palace becomes haunted, every street crowded with familiar figures; at every corner we meet some well-known face; the old Florentines return to their old places. The most indifferent traveller cannot help seeing them, be he ever so blind.

If we take some of these characters of "Romola" and look for their counterparts in another art, with a little patience we shall find them all. Ghirlandajo will show us many of them, he who, if he did not paint the walls of Florence, as he wished, portrayed the world that moved within those walls. In the choir of Santa Maria Novella the artist painted the stories of the blessed Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, but he has taken his pictures from contemporary life; he has painted his friends and neighbors, not idealized into cold abstractions, but real men and women with keen, subtle faces, acute and critical, yet not unkindly, sharpened by shop-keeping and the *tramontana*, but ennobled by wide culture and capable of kindling into enthusiasm. Many of them are ugly in line and modelling, bony and flaccid at

once, with an occasional quite abnormal development of cheeks and chin. But character can do much to beautify the most ill-favored. Each of these figures is a definite personality, clearly and distinctly marked, invaluable to the student of history, with no softening of lines or angles, a portrait straight from life. Here we are face to face with the old Florentines.

On the right is a group of humanists: Politian, "whose juvenile ugliness was not less signal than his precocious scholarship;" Marsilio Ficino, brought up as a Platonist from his cradle, "and whose mind was, perhaps, a little pulpy from that too exclusive diet," both spare and small, with pale faces; Cristoforo Landino, white-haired and worn, in black gown and *barret*. Behind them, among a group of grave, gray-haired men, is a figure handsome and majestic enough for Romola's godfather, Bernardo del Nero. On the panel directly opposite is Tito, known in Florence as *Il Bello*, in dark mantle and red cap, looking at us over his shoulder out of long brown eyes; here, too, — a genuine portrait, — is the massive strength of Niccolò Caparrà. On the left a dark, bald man, in a plain russet suit, suggests Baldassarre; and one shrewd face, with a humorous twinkle in the keen eyes, must be Nello's; while near by is another actor in our drama, young Lorenzo Tornabuoni, then in the Medicean bank.

For the peasants and some of the older folk, pretty Tessa, meek, deaf Monna Lisa, bargaining Bratti, and silly Brigida, we must go to Fra Filippo Lippi, who was not afraid to paint very commonplace sinners as saints, little rustics as Madonnas, and the street-urchins of Florence as boy-angels and blessed *bambini.*

In the Bargello we find the strange head of Charles VIII., ugliest of knight-errants, and the bust of Macchiavelli, no longer the witty young secretary of the republic, but the saturnine author of "The Prince," worn and embittered by poverty, disappointment, and the sad necessity of serving those "Signori Medici."

In the cloister of the Badia is a plain sarcophagus, surmounted by a bust, the tomb of Francesco Valori, the fiery partisan of Savonarola; the massive features and long, straight hair remind one of those Puritans and Covenanters with whom the Piagnone had much in common. Little Lillo and Ninna, and Savonarola's white-robed, olive-crowned *angiolini,* we see again and again, for the beauty of babyhood was first discovered and translated into form by the artists of the Renaissance. The portraits of Savonarola are too well known to every tourist to require note or comment. One never tries to find Romola herself; we see her, as did her blind old father, only as something vague and shining.

The November holiday of 1494, with its ugly ending for Tito, sent him to Niccolò Caparrà to buy his mail-shirt, "the garment of fear." There is a restaurant now at Niccolò's street-corner, but under a house massive and picturesque enough to justify the tablet to the memory of the old armor-maker. Tito found Caparrà forging spear-heads; and soon after his prophetic anticipation was justified by the entrance of Charles VIII. of France, whose short occupation of Florence enabled Tito to sell the library, betray the sacred trust of Bardo, and alienate Romola.

The long hall of the Medici, now Riccardi Palace, upon the Via Cavour, in which Capponi tore the treaty, — saying, "Then if you blow your trumpets, we will ring our bells," — is greatly changed, and suggests the flute and violin, not the trumpet. There are rows of mirrors in rococo frames with Cupids painted on them, and the long-arched ceiling has been splashed by Luca fa Presto with an Olympus of gods and goddesses. Not far from the palace is the gorgeous church of the Santissima Annunziata, between whose square and the hill of San Giorgio, Tessa, in the intervals of her many naps, played her poor little *rôle*. There the lamps, which swing in a constellation of gold and silver, yield a "yellow splendor in itself something supernatural and heavenly to the peasant-women." A heaven of

gilding and light and rich colors and sounds surrounds them; at once their drama, their picture-gallery, and their church; an epitome of their hopes and fears, and the vague wonder which is their nearest approach to an appreciation of the beautiful.

The lamps have been wonderful to thousands of Tessas since the evening she brought her cocoons there and, kneeling, looked at the handsome Saint Michael and thought of Tito. To-day you may see peasant-women, sad-faced and worn, as naïve and simple and dull as Tessa, if not as pretty, passing under the often-proclaimed *Giubbileo* of its doors, kissing the silver altar-front again and again and bowing to the dark face of Andrea's Christ, looking out from the splendor. Tessa is perhaps the only character in the book who is the same to-day as in the fifteenth century. Outward events make no impression upon a mind too shallow to take account of them, and the little Tuscan model from some *castello* of the surrounding hills, who sits to-day for the Florentine artist, is as little affected by the facts of United Italy and Roma Capitale as was Tessa by the entrance of the French or the war with Pisa.

The story takes us onward to the Medicean plotters in the Rucellai gardens, and their world is changed indeed. The gardens are beautiful still, with ilex and cypress and olive; but conspiracy with epigram and lute and critical admiration of

antique gems, diplomacy which conferred its highest honors upon the orator's Latinity, are as far removed from us as the peacock roasted in its feathers.

After Tito foils the attempt of his foster-father in the gardens, he is counterfoiled in turn by Romola in his own attempt to deliver Savonarola into the hands of Dolfo Spini. For a time the reformer is still in the ascendant, and we have the charming pictures of the "angelic boys," whose descent upon Tessa, and temporary conversion of Monna Brigida, brighten the latter part of the story. But tragedy soon meets us again in the Bargello. Nowhere in Florence is the contrast between the past and the present more marked than in the Bargello, that older brother of the Palazzo Vecchio, once a place of punishment and torture, the headquarters of the *podestà*, or military governor of the city. Grim memories cling about its massive walls; it has stood sieges, held patriots and traitors, sheltered tyrants, and seen blood flow in execution, massacre, and revolt; stone cells line the court and lead out of the great halls; in the council-chamber, now an armory, is the trap-door of the ancient *oubliette*, once filled with human bones, and the scaffold stood in the centre of the famous court, which has been little changed since Romola climbed the lion-guarded staircase to look her last upon her godfather. Kindly time has washed away the blood-stains and

the painted traitors, hanging head downwards from its walls; the stone escutcheons and lambrequined helmets of the old podestàs still remain; but instead of the agonized crowd that then filled the loggia, there is now a row of church-bells, graven with words of peace and blessing; in the chambers where the torturer handled his tools, Robbia's Madonnas smile upon us; and in the chapel, where the condemned received the last sacraments, Florence found her poet, a young Dante, unembittered by exile. Only the armory on the ground-floor and Pollajuolo's condottiere recall the sterner uses of the old palace.

The monks of Florence, whose predecessors bore the statue of the Impruneta, and opposed or supported Savonarola, have fallen upon evil days, but they nurse their antique glories, and still go, picturesque figures, about the streets. Once their churches were so many ecclesiastical strongholds, each brotherhood proud of its traditions and names; the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella boasting their Madonna of Cimabue and their frescoes of Ghirlandajo; the Augustinians of Santo Spirito, proud of their culture; the Carmelites, of their famous brother, Filippo Lippi, and their Brancacci chapel, that artistic sanctuary of the Renaissance where Michael Angelo and Raphael looked and learned; the Dominicans of San Marco pointing to their Angelic Brother, and to Fra Bartolommeo; the

Franciscans, proud of their poverty and of their magnificent church, and all prouder still of their importance in the ecclesiastical body, their relics, and their places in the processions of the town. To-day their pride has passed away, and even their proprietary interest in their art-treasures is sadly diminished. San Marco has gone forever from its monks, and the tourist pays his franc to see the Angelicos and visit the cell of the great reformer; Santa Croce is to be secularized as a Pantheon to the dead Florentines and the Carmine is but a parish church. But at least their frescoes all remain *in situ*, and cannot easily be dragged from their places to a gallery, a fortunate circumstance.

The brothers of the friars' churches are more interesting than the priests of the parochial ones, particularly those of Santa Maria Novella, which has kept some of its monks and all of its art-treasures. The mantle of Saint Dominic has descended but lightly upon the shoulders of these good fellows, and even his sombre souvenir cannot darken their smiling faces. The memories of Savonarola, of the saintly Bishop Antonino's works of mercy, and of the angelic monk of Fiesole have come between. There is little of Fra Angelico's poetry in them, but they are gentle and kind to the poor, and a namesake of the saint-bishop Fra Antonino, under his black hood over the white mantle, was a really

startling reminder of the greatest man of his great order; a coincidence to watch and study, with the beetling brows, the deep-set, bright eyes, the thick nose, full lips, and heavy jaw of Savonarola in Bartolommeo's portrait; the fierce frown and sweet smile the chroniclers tell us of. We were bidden by him to be quite at home and paint at ease, with the assurance that nobody was disturbed.

The sacristy was a little church-world, and gradually one learned to take an intelligent interest in it. Peasants and city poor entered for consolation in heavy sorrow, and for the smallest gossip of daily life. On some days there came a mighty shuffling, echoing along the passages, and a flood of the personally conducted burst into sight, inundating everything till one seized the canvas by its top, and the easel by its legs, to preserve them; while the tourists climbed steps, read their books, studied the backs of monuments, for the recondite always appealed to them, and formed their ideas to quick music. A sketch was always tempting to them, and just as on the stage they would have applauded a real lamp-post or a real horse-car, so a live artist at work was for the nonce more absorbing than the pictures of a dead one. They had little time, however, to look, for they were involuntary impressionists and were hurried away by their leader. These caravans were always noisy and hurried, and no wonder, for a con-

ductor who is at once dictionary, time-table, mentor, friend, and whipper-in of stray couples, must be a tired and a worried person.

The brothers divided the duty of *cicerone* cleverly. Fra Giovanni, a stout, handsome monk, evidently their best spokesman, explained their Ghirlandaji; for they are a more complicated people than the other frescoed ones, because their names are often known and may be catalogued to the visitor, not only in the anticipation of *buona mano*, but with real, corporate pride. "We have not such Giotti as has Santa Croce," said he, one day, "but our Gaddi and Memmi are unequalled in the world; and as for our Ghirlandaji" — here he interrupted himself to jingle two keys at some distant tourists and call to them, in a sort of subdued shout, "Do the gentlemen wish to visit the Spanish chapel?" Brother —— (his name has escaped our memories) could show the other chapels, and any one who happened to be near, in frock or out of it, monk or bell-ringer, would cheerfully and unasked fling a bit of information to any foreigner who happened to approach the object named: "*Terra invetriata, molto bella, Luca della Robbia.*" The Robbia fountain was beautiful indeed, and it was a pleasure to see this noble art-work taking its part in the daily uses of life, as the brothers often and again washed their hands or rinsed their *fiaschi* in it, nowise fearing the in-

junction running beneath the Madonna across the marble: "Take heed that thy hands be pure if thou washest here." Service after service passed out of the little sacristy as we sat there, and the bell took on a solemn sound for us when we learned that it ushered forth the *viaticum* upon its frequent errand to the sick and dying.

During another visit to Florence, two years later, we saw Brother Antonino again, and he sat for a study of his head. He looked as much like Savonarola as ever, but "the pleasant lust of arrogance" in the great reformer was softened in him into a gentle complacency that artists should wish to paint him. To the remark, "So you are still at Santa Maria Novella," he replied; "I shall die here." Let us hope so; it would be a pity that the church should be secularized, that the "Sposa" of Michelangelo should have her nun's veil taken from her and should exchange her cowled brothers for the blue-coated guardians of a government museum.

In the latter half of "Romola," the episodical groupings of various characters whose dialogue is framed by the mercato, or the loggia, or the shop, are replaced by the continuous dramatic interest. The fate of Romola herself is interwoven with the fate of the republic, and the background of the story becomes the history of Florence. We follow the heroine upon an upward current of suffering as she

loses, successively, husband, godfather, and teacher. upon the same current the city is borne along, breathing hard in the struggle that preceded its final agony, — the siege of 1529, — while George Eliot makes Tito an active instrument in the fortunes of the state, without violating historical consistency, and to Tito, whose "mind was a knife-edge, working without the need of momentum," she adds the bludgeon-like Dolfo Spini. We see the great monk holding the people, first by enthusiasm, then by the means which enthusiasts are often swept into using when they feel the reins slipping from them; finally accepting, under pressure, the Franciscan challenge to enter the fire. Before that, however, the crowning bitterness of Romola's life is reached, when her teacher, Savonarola, fails her, and Bernardo del Nero goes to the scaffold. All the remainder of the story that relates purely to the heroine is anti-climax. We see Tito's knife-blade working noiselessly on, the edge turned always from himself, severing women's heart-strings and men's lives, his prosperity increasing with his treachery. The trial by fire follows, and the Masque of the Furies, and as Tito's fortunes are at their highest, the knife turns in his hands, cutting his best-laid schemes to pieces. After the death of the traitor comes the burning of Savonarola, and the story ends.

The tragedy is lighted by the conversion of Monna

Brigida on the day of the Pyramid of Vanities and by the scenes with Bratti and Tessa. But the main pathway of this latter portion of the story becomes that from San Marco to the Piazza della Signoria, along which pass figures, blessing and cursing; cowled monks and armed rabble; the torch and the crucifix, but all tending forward, past the death of Savonarola, to the apotheosis of Florence, when she stood alone for liberty, and fell at last after her famous siege.

It is one of the longest pathways trodden in the story, for the convent is farther from the centre of the city than most of the points already mentioned. The nearest way from the palace is down the Calzaioli to the Cathedral Place, then by the Via Cavour to the Piazza di San Marco. Calzaioli is still the busiest street in Florence, and in Romola's time, far narrower than now, bore the name of the Corso degli Adimari at its northern end, and in the portion near the old palace, that of the Via de' Pittori, for the painters who helped give fame to Florence were worthily lodged there. The Via Cavour was the Via Larga (the wide street), on which still stands the palace of Cosimo, the Ancient. A rather paradoxical loss of its old name followed its second widening, and a good choice has given to the street of the first republic's enslaver the name of one of the liberators of Italy.

San Marco, standing upon its wide piazza, is at first disappointing. It is too trim, the edges of wall and arch too sharp, too liberally covered with white and yellow wash. It seems almost tame for the great memories that should haunt it and walk the bare corridors under the beamed roof. There are plenty of them: memories of Bishop Antonino and Fra Bartolommeo and the monk of Fiesole, all giving way before those of the extraordinary man who, from 1492 to 1498, was the central figure of Italy; who drew upon himself the hatred of the Pope and the Franciscans, the admiration of Michelangelo and partisans of liberty; who reconciled austerity with the love of beauty in the eyes of such painters as Botticelli, Baccio della Porta, and Lorenzo di Credi, and who believed that to unlock the doors of Paradise the keys of Saint Peter must be cleansed from the rust of the slothful popes, the blood of Sixtus and the Borgias. Florence is so rich in famous men that her long portico of the Uffizi has room for but a small portion of them, but among them no name is more essentially Florentine than that of the Ferrarese Girolamo Savonarola. The traces of his footsteps are visible enough in the city which has so well retained its ancient appearance. Every one visits his cell in San Marco, and sees his portraits there and in the academy. His church has been modern-

ized into seventeenth-century ugliness, but on the night of the "Masque of the Furies," it echoed with the fusillade of monks and acolytes firing from the altar, and with the crash of blows as the scriptorius. a kind of loving young Saint John to Savonarola, beat back the *compagnacci* with his heavy crucifix. Along the streets which, on the night of his arrest. the reformer traversed between the armed guards he had asked from the priors, we go to the Palazzo Vecchio and the Piazza della Signoria.

There are in the world few grander buildings than the citadel of Florentine liberty, the Palazzo Vecchio; it is an embodiment of militant beauty in stone. In earlier times the scene of so much that was noble and base, it became in the fifteenth century the place of Savonarola's triumph and agony. For there in the vast hall of that great council he so labored to secure, he set a whole people to work at a fever-heat of enthusiasm, with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci among the workers, that an asylum might be created, a refuge and an appeal to the many against the injustice of the few The Medici changed the place; the arch-patrons of art destroyed the designs of Angelo and Leonardo, setting up the clumsy statues of Leo and the dukes, and the ceilings of Vasari, celebrating Cosimo; they wanted no unpleasant souvenir of the great council. But the centuries have seen "the Medicean

stamp outworn," and have placed the statue of the monk in the middle of his hall.

Broad stairways lead to the base of the tower whose machicolated parapet and column-supported summit give it such unique character. A narrow spiral leads up and up, each loophole-window showing a higher sky-line, till, when the top is nearly reached, under the battlements, between the corbels of which are the shields of the republic, a horrible place opens from the stairs into the wall. In it there is just room for a stone bench the length of a man. The small, heavy door swings outward. In this hideous cell Savonarola lay for days, his body racked by the torture, his mind by the consciousness that his enemies were inventing and attributing to him lying speeches to dismay his disciples. He left it only for the stake. In the massive wall the window, less than a foot square, splays in and funnels toward a point; the one object visible from this slit in the wall is the brown mass of Santa Croce, the stronghold of his enemies, the Franciscans, whence issued the challenge for the trial by fire, the first fatal downward step in the reformer's path.

A few paces above this *inferno*, Paradise itself seems to open as the platform of the tower is reached. Around one are the forked Ghibelline battlements; from their midst rise the four massive columns; a dizzy staircase, winding about one of these, leads to

the bells; still another and narrower stairway takes one, with care and stooping, to the cow-stall, the abode of the antique *vacca*, the bell whose lowing called the townsmen together. There it still hangs from beams placed pyramidally and forming the point of the tower. Above it, upon a vane, in violent foreshortening, Marzocco, the lion of the republic, in that attitude of ecstatic flourishing peculiar to lions in such cases, waves his mane and tail high above his brother Marzocco of the Bargello, and over all other Marzocchi, bronze, marble, or wooden, in Tuscany. Before one is the valley of the Arno from the mountains of the Casentino to the dentelated Apennines of Carrara, with the shining river curving down to Pisa. Below is the city, and as one mounts, the great buildings rise far above their fellows, as great men in history rise to their true places in the past, when seen from the present. The familiar landmarks of the old time are still there, till we read the city like a page of Villani or of Dino Compagni. Palaces and churches stand to-day as when Guelph and Ghibelline were names potent to conjure with and to strike fire from steel; streets and squares, as when Savonarola quivered in the room below or burned upon the piazza.

There is something new, too: "The Pope Angelico is not come yet;" but here at our hand, upon the parapet, workmen are setting out lamps for the

birthday of a queen who writes Savoy after her name, and yet who gathers among those who acclaim her with affection, Florentines and the antique enemies of Florence, citizens of north and south, — a queen of United Italy. For the ashes of Savonarola, which were sown broadcast to the wind, have borne seed in the days when the land cherishes the dust of patriots and writes upon the stones of its cities the names of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and Cavour and Victor Emmanuel.

The story of "Romola" leaves us with a sense of sadness and defeat. Savonarola died mute and unjustified; his friends and disciples robbed, murdered, and driven into exile; his life's work undone, and the kingdom of God, he had labored to found, shaken to its foundations. But only a few years after, under a Medicean pope, he is solemnly rehabilitated by the church; the historians estimate him at his true value; devotees make pilgrimages to his cell; Fra Bartolommeo paints him as the patron saint of his order, and Raphael places him in a frescoed Paradise among a glorious company of prophets and sages. To-day, in an Italy that does not love monks, Ferrara raises his statue before the castle of the Estensi, and in Florence, in the vastness of the great council-hall, his colossal image. Many changes have come to his beloved city; but she is faithful to his memory, and

those who do not reverence the priest honor the patriot who withstood tyrants and loved freedom.

For here, in Italy, liberty has worn many guises; she has hidden herself in the scholar's gown and has laughed in the motley. She has rioted in the Masque of the Furies, and put on the soldier's corselet, the poet's laurel, and the monk's frock and cowl. In our own days we have seen her in the red shirt of Garibaldi, when she came to take possession of the land. The miracle that prophets and patriots prayed for in vain has been wrought in its own time. After three hundred years the prophecy of Savonarola has been fulfilled, and the deliverers have come, not from without, but within, not to save the city only, but the whole country: a king whose proudest title was that of honest man, and a soldier who unsheathed the sword of righteousness. Italy is free from the Alps to the straits. The narrow jealousies and fierce civic hatreds of province to province and town to town are vanishing before the large ideal of national unity, an ideal nobler than that of the great reformer, and Florence can again write liberty upon her banner above the lions and the lilies.

PARMA

# PARMA

## I

PARMA! Correggio! They are exchangeable words for you and me and the art-loving of all countries, since it is her possession of the work of Antonio Allegri that gives the town importance. Upon that Roman road which passes straight through the city, there was marching and countermarching from the time when in 183 B.C. Marcus Æmilius Lepidus gave his name to road and province alike and there were doubtless deeds done that resounded throughout Italy, but the road itself, stretching as it did from Rimini to Piacenza, was, at least, just where *Colonia Julia Augusta Parma* arose, itself the mightiest thing in sight and memory. As far as our interest is concerned, it passed along in obscurity for fifteen hundred years, nowise illuminated by the constant quarrels that gave to the town of which we write, successive masters, until in the beginning of the sixteenth century, precisely at this point of Parma, the Via Æmilia became irradiated, brilliant with the name and presence of a famous artist.

The exterior impress upon the city postdates Correggio, for it was only after the Farnese came to power that Parma had any settled government. Once, when as a town of the Exarchate, she looked to Ravenna for the password, she must have flourished exceedingly, for the Byzantines called her the golden city, and we should perhaps still have some solemnly glittering mosaics, relics of that Chrysopolis, if the Lombards had not destroyed the place in 773. Afterward, and during the destructive activity which began in the dark ages and continued through mediæval times, Parma had so many masters that they might pass us like a panoramic show of historic characters illustrating all times and costumes for half a millennial: antipopes and popes; Guelphic captains, the Giberti, the Rossi, the Sanvitali; John XXII.; Louis of Bavaria; John of Bohemia; Scala lords of Verona; Visconti of Milan; Sforza too, and lastly, Popes Julius II. and Leo X. The tiara finally seemed to have settled firmly upon the city, and if the Farnese who began to rule with Pierluigi were not a delectable family, at least they provided a succession of seven dukes.

They, however, gave their town no such fatherly care as was accorded by the Montefeltro to Urbino or the Gonzaga to Mantua. Parma was too often only the tail of the kite. Parmesan affairs were too frequently watched, but from far away, from the

Papal Court or the throne of Spain or the marshes of Flanders, by princes busied with outside interests. Thus the present Parma grew up stately, formal, and rather bare, dating from the Farnese and the late sixteenth century and countersigned ducal by its huge brick Castello. In Italy it was quintessentially ducal to have just such a pile of masonry to hold the master safely within and to hold the townsmen in subjection without; no well-regulated reigning family could dispense with such a puissant aid to good government. In the Republics it was different; in Siena and Florence, for instance, the Palazzo Pubblico came shouldering into the square, and if Cosimo Pater Patriæ wanted a palace for himself, he built it on the street like any other man; a fortress it was, if you will, in its massiveness, but only one of many such private strongholds scattered throughout the city. More than this, he gave not a little thought to private jealousy, and tore up Brunelleschi's ground-plans and elevations, lest their ambitious character should provoke republican envy. On the contrary, Estensi, Gonzaga, Montefeltro, Visconti, and Farnese alike set great, moat-girt castles upon the town's edge, whence they could watch and strike if need be. The Castello forms the principal feature of Ferrara, Mantua, Parma, and Urbino; it is huge in Milan also; but there the great church overshadows it with its presence. As one passes

from city to city, each castello seems bigger than the other, and, taken together, they afford admirable examples of the beauty, picturesqueness, nobility even, of brick when used in large masses. The great flat expanses are impressive in their very blankness; they are blank, however, only as to lack of sculptured ornament; color they have in plenty given by sun and rain, and flying dust, and here and there, as where the Parmesan Castello overhangs the water, they forsake their naked simplicity and break into a whole mass of flying galleries and ports to once-existent drawbridges.

Symonds thought Parma "perhaps the brightest little *Residenzstadt* of the second class in Italy;" to us it seemed as with so much else in the peninsula that its brightness was wholly an affair of the season at which you happened to visit it. It is gay and bright in spring and summer, — what town is not in Italy? Then the band plays in the evenings, many of the shops are still lighted and the people pour into the square, or loiter homeward from Vespers at the Steccata or the Duomo; but in winter it appeared to us unutterably sad, sad as Modena, yielding in melancholy only to Ravenna and Ferrara, and lacking even the brightness of Ferrara's market-place. For the grim castle of Mantua is relieved by the quaint cheerfulness of the streets, that of Ferrara by the cathedral's picturesque neighborhood; but

Parma's streets stretch unbroken, unrelieved by any sally.

If primness were not so utterly foreign to Renaissance life or to anything Italian that came after it, we should call some of these streets prim ; perhaps a little of the starch and powder of the court has gotten into things; the place looks something more than respectable, and during our last visit to Parma in the winter, we remember not cabs, but heavy old family carriages rolling slowly by, containing very possibly children and grandchildren of Maria Louisa's ladies of honor.

The loveliness of summer belongs to Parma in common with other cities; the vine-hung mulberry trees take hands and dance in the fields about her as around other towns, but Verona would be beautiful in any weather, so would Venice or Florence or Rome; Parma needs sun in her gray streets and blue sky above them. Our former visits had been during spring and summer, but our last sojourn was in winter days when snow covered everything to the east of the Apennines, and when the white fog pierced through your very bones. In the mist-filled solitudes about the Duomo after nightfall the cold fairly took you by the throat; the Baptistery shone with ice, and the porch-lions of the Cathedral looked as though some eighteenth-century Farnese had fitted powdered wigs upon them. The *Torrente*

from its bridges seemed a Phlegethon, a river of whirling smoke, but felt like what it really was, a reservoir of benumbing vapor.

In those days when we went into the Castello we wondered, in the bitter cold, how men and women with blood in circulation, and therefore capable of congealing, could possibly keep alive there.

In one room we found a fine fire in a large sheet-iron stove and thought delightedly that it was in part at least for us poor human animals, custodians and visitors, but no! "It is kept burning always," said the *custode*," in order that a perfectly even temperature may help to preserve the two best pictures of Correggio." It was a pretty tribute, this "fire that burns for aye," to the tutelary genius of the place, and logical enough, for Correggio keeps up the foreign circulation of Parma; but it seemed a bit inhuman, and reminded one *tant soit peu* of the Irishman who in freezing weather said, "Put the blanket on the pig; 't is he that pays the rint." Italians, however, are really affectionate in their consideration of art objects; if they maltreat them, it is only through ignorance, and Maria Louisa's refusal to accept from Louis XVIII. a million francs for the San Girolamo, although she was at the time in sore straits for money, is perhaps the most honorable thing chronicled concerning a lady whose life was by no means destitute of good actions.

The Pinacoteca, as may be inferred from that unique sheet-iron stove, is in the Castello; but Correggio is so great a glory that he claims consideration by and for himself and should not be talked of until after anything otherwise distracting about the town is quite finished and done with.

In the castle, too, is the famous Teatro Farnese, as strange as Palladio's *Scena* of Vicenza, and ten times more impressive.

In all its decay it is still a beautiful Renaissance theatre; one of our companions longed to have it summer-time that he might sleep for a night in the midst of this departed magnificence. It would be well to sleep soundly there and not walk; only ghosts could do that with safety, for the wood is rotted to punk; and the *custode*, saying, "Take care, *c'è pericolo*," leads one up prescribed paths, where beams have been placed to prop up the seats and incidentally the guardian's perquisites. If one did wake, one would perhaps see Poliziano's Orfeo, or Machiavelli's Mandragora, moving in shadowy pantomime across the vast stage, but, for our part, we should rather expect to meet the ghosts of those who played *real* dramas in the Castello, ghosts made substantial by the portraits in the Pinacoteca of dozens of Farnese. The latter are not a little interesting to the student of history, and there are notably a boy-duke Alessandro, an Elizabeth of

France with her husband, and a terrible-looking seventeenth-century Maria Farnese; while Moro, Substermans, and Vandyck are among the painters.

We walked the Æmilian Way from gate to gate of the city, and even strolled into the outskirts; and after the Castello and the Duomo, San Giovanni, and the Steccata, we of course visited the Camera of San Paolo, where the place is still consecrate to women and a normal school is sheltered in the convent.

But the group of buildings which called one again and again was that upon the Cathedral square, made up of the Duomo, the Baptistery, and San Giovanni Evangelista. It is a sad, deserted place, unlike the busy spots about the churches of Ferrara, Modena, or Mantua. The Baptistery, godparent, it is said, to every man and woman in Parma for many centuries, is a grim Gothic structure, and in Benedetto Antelami, the author of the sculptures upon its front, certain critics consider that they recognize a day star of Italian art, a true precursor of Niccola Pisano.

"If Italians have not always painted well, at least they have always painted," says one of their own writers, and the Duomo's interior is a testimony to the activity of eight hundred years. Sitting at the further end of the choir, one noted close at hand the archiepiscopal throne carved at about the time of Hastings; beyond in tawny marble was an altar

contemporary with the Lombard League; above the throne was a marble and gilt bas-relief of the thirteenth century; under a curtain and where later stucco had been scraped away, one saw a Madonna of the school of Giotto; fifteenth-century stalls gave us sitting room; there was plenty of *cinquecento* and *seicento* work, while two huge gilded candlesticks and a *barocco* bench were of a time when Tiepolo had already painted periwigged goddesses, and Stendhal was about to write his "Chartreuse de Parme." All these representatives of different ages were within a radius of fifteen feet; thus it is in lands where people are in no hurry; think of it, ye architects, sculptors, painters, who contract in May to decorate a building and must finish or forfeit by the following April! But beautiful as is the old Romanesque basilica, one comes, not to see its grand architecture of the middle ages, but to visit works which were only possible to a man who had the whole fifteenth century behind him and the influence of the *cinquecento*, the culminating epoch of Italian art, about him.

## II

SPACE, light, and motion were what Antonio Allegri of Correggio most longed to express; for this expression he made the open heaven his field, and masses of floating, soaring, human bodies, draped or undraped, his material. The performance of such a task required a temperament almost magically endowed, but such a temperament he possessed, and he gave it full scope in the dome of the Cathedral of Parma and the cupola of San Giovanni. The frescoes in these churches are his greatest achievements, and by them we may judge him. Their arrangement is very similar, both represent an assumption of Madonna or of the Saviour. Above, in the centre of the dome, is the ascending Christ or Mary with attendant or supporting angels; where the interior cornice surrounds the octagonal cupola of the Duomo, apostles stand against a simulated balustrade gazing upward, and on the pendentives of both churches, saints and angels are seated upon clouds. To those who, looking upon these frescoes, think superficially, Correggio is as a painter of flying angels and radiant glories, an arch-idealist; to those who reason more carefully, he is an arch-realist,

almost *the* realist of Italian art. What differentiates him from the accepted realist is this: the latter only too often makes realism and ugliness synonymous, Correggio's is realism by selection applied only to the beautiful. But it is realism; not one painter in the whole range of Italian art so hated what he understood to be conventionality. If his subject is above, it must be seen from underneath, no matter how the point of view may detract from the beauty of the work; his architecture must be painted in simulated perspective, and he will tolerate nothing which by its perspective would fall out if it were real.

In his frescoes of San Giovanni which antedated those of the cathedral, Correggio, first among the artists of Italy, threw aside the whole architectonic tradition of art and said to himself, "I will break through tradition and cupola at once, will consider that the walls are no longer there, and will make a realistic heaven, where real figures among real clouds shall be seen in real perspective, such as would actually obtain." *Nota bene*, that a cupola, a hollow dome without ribs or projections from the plaster, is the only form to which such a *trompe l'œil*, such illusory perspective, could be applied without being ridiculous. Even here it is open to criticism, but if any man ever existed for whom it was entirely right to do this thing, that man was

Antonio Allegri of Correggio. Imitators have abused his example until the abuse became detestable; but the example remains so brilliant, so satisfying, that we blame only those who failed in their imitation.

The first and most potent factor in the effect of his Assumption of the Duomo is its triumphant realization of aerial, transparent fresco-color of which indeed it is the earliest perfectly successful example in Italy. To the artist, and above all to the artist who has worked upon the plaster and knows how readily overpainting becomes heavy and dead, the marvellous lightness, silveriness, airiness of Correggio's frescoes, especially of his frescoes of the Cathedral, are an unceasing wonder.

Correggio's second factor is his distribution of light; his third, expression by movement. Leonardo da Vinci had discovered light and shade; Correggio improved upon his invention. Leonardo experimenting with many media painted shadows which have fallen into blackness, Correggio, as Milanesi has happily put it, "clarified Da Vinci's manner." Leonardo pursued the light with profoundest observation; Correggio juggled with it: he did not ask it to be mysterious, he was satisfied that it should be radiant. He *entertained* himself with light, as Michelangelo entertained himself with muscular expression, Raphael with composition; like both the others, he possessed his means and made it yield not only

enjoyment, but its ultimate force in certain directions. He composed with light more than with lines, and here he came nearer to being conventional than elsewhere, for there is a certain amount of *parti pris* in his chiaroscuro, which, however, if not exactly unconventional, is always real. As to his third factor, Correggio is Perpetual Motion itself; with him everything is in action.

That movement in repose which is so suited to the demands of great mural art, which helps to make Michelangelo's Pietà of St. Peter's so superb, which informs so many figures of Raphael, so many altar-pieces even of the *quattrocento*, is quite absent from Correggio's work. His angels of the dome mount upward, cleave the air, toss and bend, bestride clouds which they ride like curveting horses, but they are never quiet for a moment.

Even in altar-pieces, where Raphael's saints stand firmly, though their lines may curve ever so gracefully, Correggio's figures undulate until they seem almost out of equilibrium. Michelangelo's Delphic and Libyan Sibyls have superb movement, but it is ponderated, it does not fatigue the onlooker; Correggio's Saints Jerome and Sebastian in the altar-pieces to which they respectively give their names are absolutely unsteady upon their feet. In sum his movement in smaller pictures is often ineffective; but when he masses it in his great frescoes, it be-

comes, on the contrary, a potent element of his effect.

Smiling, youthful beauty is what Correggio elected to paint. His sprite-like angels, naked youths and maidens, who if measured by mortal span may have lived for fourteen years, are dearest both to their creator and to the onlooker. With tossing hair, wide light-filled eyes, and parted lips they ride the clouds upon the pendentives or uphold Madonna; among them the babies tumble, with the same great lustrous eyes and with little, realistic, formless, toothless mouths. In the pendentives or about the base of the cupola are patriarchs, prophets, and saints, and here Correggio is puzzled; he would juggle age away, would sprinkle it with the water of Eternal Youth; it has no dignity for him; its emaciation, its dryness, he will have none of; his old men may be brawny, but they are over-plump, over-muscled indeed, since in them Correggio shows none of the science of expression through anatomical emphasis which Michelangelo possessed. Their thick hair is always tumbling about and always curling; their beards evidently grow over full-lipped, smiling mouths, and they are not very pleasing as types. In some cases it seems as if Correggio had but taken his youths and, clapping false beards upon them, had said to patriarch or prophet, "I care nothing for your face; toss and turn your great

body in the light and in the half-light; that is all the help I ask of you." And yet they are fine. This is what one says again and again before Correggio, "and yet," and "in spite of," ending always with surrender to a compelling enchantment and force.

Burckhardt with excellent analysis, Symonds with admirable word-painting, have said much of the psychological side of Correggio's types, have found them wondrously beautiful, yet denied them power to do good were they to live. In this essay, however, we are considering not the psychological but the purely artistic side of the painter. If the authors of these lines may here for a moment intrude their own personality upon their book, it would be to say that much in Correggio's point of view is unsympathetic, almost antipathetic to them; all of his minor work, his world-famous altar-pieces and mythological pictures included, seems but loosely put together, if brought into presence of the almost architecturally constructed composition of Raphael, the grave splendor of Titian's Assumption, the profoundly suggestive figures of Michelangelo. His sweetness even appears but superficial after that of Leonardo. Nevertheless, and in spite of all these reservations, the authors of this essay, when first they came into the presence of the dome of Parma, for awhile at least had no capacity for anything but de-

lighted admiration of a phenomenal art development. Wholly phenomenal it is, and the surprise of it adds not a little to its effectiveness. A day in which one has a supreme artistic experience may be marked by a whitest stone, and such a day should be afforded by a first visit to Parma; for there is an immense sensation in coming suddenly into the presence of the highest and best achievement of one of the world's masters. Acquaintance with Correggio's pictures in the galleries of Europe prepares but in small measure for what awaits one in the cathedral of Parma.

There the ordering of Correggio's work is as follows: in the pendentives of the cupola are four seated saints with many youthful angels, the seated figures enthroned upon clouds. Twelve colossal apostles stand along an octagonal cornice behind a painted balustrade, looking upward at the Assumption of the Virgin. Painted candelabra rise at the angles of the cornice, and between them are many boy genii standing, sitting, or reclining. Above them the whole cupola is filled with clouds and a multitude of flying figures surrounding the Virgin, who is borne upward. Under the soffits of the arches to the cupola are painted figures of genii, six of which are by Correggio, the others by Mazzola-Bedoli.

The above is the material distribution of the frescoes. Considered generally, the result is the achieve-

ment of one of the few works which may be called sublime. Technically considered, this Assumption presents the first triumphantly successful realization of aerial, transparent fresco-color. For the first time also, save in the case of the same master's frescoes of San Giovanni, architectonics are disregarded, and a whole cupola is shown as one undivided and realistic composition. The color is beyond criticism; the arrangement, which in principle is, on the contrary, distinctly open to criticism, is justified by its result. It is splendidly, dazzlingly successful; and yet not only the few to whom it is antipathetic, but the many who profoundly admire, may analyze it and find in it certain germs of decadence.

To begin with, it is confused, and in the painter's passion for realistic foreshortening he has frequently sacrificed dignity, and has sometimes become frankly awkward. The monumental grandeur of Raphael and Michelangelo is completely absent, but it is replaced by another grandeur, which comes from sweep and whirl and radiant figures so multiplied in numbers that the very volume of the painter's creation adds immensely to its power. They are upon every side, these figures, bending and tossing, floating and diving through clouds, hovering above the abysmal void that is between the dome and the earth below it. There is a lack of restraint, indeed, there is a direct straining for that illusion which is not wholly

in accordance with the principles of architectonic decoration, but *any* violation of artistic conventions is permissible to a genius who through rupture with tradition creates new forms of beauty. Here is the triumphant application of realism to a vision, not the tranquil, contemplative vision of an older master, but a moving vision, rapturous and ecstatic.

It must be admitted that the color of these frescoes, the element in fact which technically is most admirable in the work, varies astonishingly under varying conditions of the atmosphere. In spring and summer when the light reflected from below and admitted through the *oculi* fills the cupola, this color seems all that we have said of it, — more cool and silvery than any fresco-color which preceded it. In the dark winter days and under a threatening sky, it is quite different; then the lower figures of the cupola, those about the balustrade, are rather red in their shadows, not quite bricky, but approaching brickiness far more than in fine weather; the upper figures are cooler and those of the pendentives are as silvery as ever. All this means that a decorator can paint for only one set of atmospheric conditions, and that in Italy the conditions are practically those of an eight months' summer, when light pours into the churches, even through the smallest openings, and is reflected back and upward from pavement, pillar, and wall. In one town after another the

traveler sets down in his diary, "The frescoes could not be seen at all;" that is because he goes to them at the wrong season and at the wrong hours. If visited at the right season and time, nearly every fresco in Italy which is not injured beyond deciphering can be well seen. And yet it is notable that wherever a dome is decorated, and in spite of the fact that such painting is planned as an enhancement to the church, seen from the usual point of view, — that is, the pavement,— the visitor is always taken to some higher point of vantage and told, "Here is the proper place from which to see the frescoes." This is to a certain extent reasonable, since after the *ensemble* has produced its effect, there is always detail which makes closer inspection interesting, for no artist who has lived ever struck the exact mean of strength or delicacy, permitting his work upon a very high dome or ceiling to focus its entire carrying power upon just one point of vision. This shifting about of the spectator is an argument in favor of concentrating dome decoration upon the pendentives, which can nearly always be admirably seen from below.

In Parma, then as elsewhere, one may climb to a higher point; few people do, but it is well worth the doing, and we supplemented each visit to the church by a journey to the intermural gallery which surrounds the cupola. It is interesting to explore

the bones of these mediæval monsters, these Romanesque and Gothic churches, which were not so time-resisting as Greek temples, but whose dusty skeletons had to be constantly patched and propped from within as well as from without their epidermises of brick or stone (for cupolas have often, like human beings, three skins).

In the Parmesan Duomo, an exceptionally narrow and steep stone staircase twists you up rapidly to above the pendentives; their outer surfaces — or inner, as you please — rise in huge lumpish mounds like giant shoulders heaving up the central dome; above them old, old beams are a framework of bones to support the outer skin of tiles. The dust, the cobwebs, the sharp contrasts of bright light and black shadow, the worn steps, the bells amid their ship-like cordage and wheels, make such places unique in their quaintness. The guide pulls open with an echoing rattle a small door in the thick wall; light bursts in; below you is an awful depth; two iron bars, strong, but slight to the imagination, are between you and it, and beyond the bars and the abyss, the smiling giants of Correggio float lightly over a dizzy gulf that makes your spinal marrow creep. There is an admixture of horror with delight in the first moment, and this feeling, combined with a certain exaltation, and the excitement of suddenly looking out from a dark, bewildering, cramped pas-

sage into a wide, light-filled dome, adds greatly to the sense of vision.

They are close at hand now upon every side of the spectator, floating or tossing, poised and hanging, or shooting upward, while behind the main groups is a background of smiling figures with close-set shoulders and clinging arms, — "the young-eyed cherubim" garlanding Madonna.

Here one is at last face to face with these much-discussed types of Correggio. It is easy to follow lines of obvious criticism, the faces all resemble each other, they are idealizations, abstractions with always the ripe, smiling mouth, the round cheeks, the radiant eyes. They are all of one family, a glorified, happy family. There is no terror here as with Michelangelo, hardly any awe even, but when the critic, having said all this, goes further and would talk of prettiness or of insipid uniformity of character, he ceases, utterly disarmed, for here in this whirling mass is *puissance*, something of the tremendous sweep that should come when the choir sings, "Behold, God the Lord passeth by," and which makes Correggio one of the half-dozen sublime masters in Art.

These are not blessed spirits, they are sprites, "they are fauns," says Burckhardt, and after him, Symonds; and it must be admitted that they suggest the spirits of the Tempest rather than the

angels and seraphs of the Bible, but their elfin beauty needs not distract us from considering the general effect. It is the very volume of this whirling, sweeping mass that moves us. Where Correggio places one or two of these shapes upon a canvas he plays to us upon a flute and allures us with his piping, but when he pours them upon us in hundreds he "unstops the full organ." If, as individual figures, they are fairy-like, as a mass they are apocalyptic.

"But what good," persists Burckhardt, "could we expect from these creations if they came to life"? and truly Correggio does seem more than half a pagan or half a child in his cultus of pure joy. These spirits do not suffer, feel no terror; they do not know any better than to be just simply and entirely happy. But does not the critic, in insisting upon their potentiality for good, set up an ethical standard which it might be embarrassingly hard to uphold. In looking at the face of Michelangelo's "Night," or his "Dawn," do we know what either would do if she too began to breathe and move: she would be titanic surely, but how would she use her force? Would she pull down Jupiter to help mortals or for the mere pleasure of power? Each has a giant's strength, but might not she "use it like a giant"? What evil could we find in Correggio's people? If bright and joyous spirits are celestial, why, so are his; he laughs and smiles by choice, but he smiles

as Michelangelo frowns, sublimely; elevation is his, and elevation is ethical, for in spite of his lack of restraint and his exaggeration of illusion in mock architecture, the outpouring of spirit, the sweep and power, shown in his Assumption of the Virgin, make him one of the half-dozen sublime masters of Italian painting, and we echo Ludwig Tieck's words: "Let no one say he has seen Italy, let no one think he has learnt the lofty secrets of art, till he has seen thee and thy cathedral, O Parma!"

Correggio executed two other cycles of frescoes, — the very secular decorations of the Camera di San Paolo, and in the cupola of San Giovanni Evangelista, an Ascension of Christ, a work which antedated that of the Duomo. In the Ascension this youth of twenty-six deliberately threw aside the entire decorative paraphernalia of the fifteenth century, the scrolls and thrones and embroidered patterns, the flowers and fruits and garlands, and, like a young soldier who in wishing to make a supreme effort found his armor cumbersome, he cast it from him and fought baresark. In return for *quattrocento* ornament he accepted nothing but nude bodies and the simplest of draperies as his material.

Signor Corrado Ricci, the learned curator of the Parmesan galleries, has published an admirable book upon Correggio which all lovers of the artist should

read. It is not often that one takes exception to his reasoning, but it is difficult to agree with some of his opinions regarding the frescoes of San Giovanni. He thinks that because of their greater restraint they surpass those of the Duomo, but what they gain in simplicity and restraint they lose in lack of volume. Correggio is not one of those artists who are at their best when they are simplest, and in the frescoes of San Giovanni he has made most use of the types that were least congenial to him, those of middle-aged or old men. Signor Ricci compares these saints and apostles with those of Michelangelo to the disadvantage of the latter. "The ostentatious display of anatomical reliefs" with Michelangelo never fails to show a perfect competency, a knowledge of construction, which is absent in Correggio, his saints in the pendentives are excellent, but his apostles about the Christ look swollen; their huge muscles are not modelled; their attitudes are as constrained as those of Michelangelo without showing the latter's knowledge of construction or grandeur of line.

Having considered the two cupolas in their general decorative impression, there remains in the mind, as must be the case in the remembrance of all great grouped masses, certain features which stand out as adding to or detracting from that same general effect, but even at the maximum of their

importance these remain details. Our opportunity to study them is largely owed to the water-color studies and line-engravings of Paolo Toschi, who literally spent his life upon the scaffolding, examining and copying the crumbling frescoes of the Duomo and San Giovanni. No more touching tribute has been paid to a master in the whole history of art. The sincerity of the copyist was absolute, the ability very considerable, and yet careful comparison of the copies with the originals, while demonstrating even more fully our debt to Toschi in showing how much since the engraver did his work has actually faded from the plaster beyond deciphering, shows also that the disciple, with all his piety, somewhat weakened his subject. He has at once refined (in the sense of smoothing and softening) the modelling, and slightly vulgarized the spirit of these great works. The refinement probably proceeded from the damaged condition of the frescoes; that is to say, where Correggio's modelling could no longer be seen, Toschi put in that of the Italian *settecento*, and the vulgarization again comes from the fact that the engraver lived in the century of Tiepolo, not in that of Raphael.

Looking, then, at details, we note first of all the disadvantage of realistic sacrifice to foreshortening. Christ and the Madonna, whose Ascension forms the

subject of Correggio's two cycles, are the pettiest things in the whole composition. Madonna may not soar freely, but must be supported, and is violently foreshortened; hence her body is all knees and feet, her face all chin and nostrils, while the frog-like attitude of the Saviour has been cited for three centuries. The outer rim of the garland of angels is fringed with legs which kick rather aggressively and monotonously; somewhat more of compositional spacing, through the use of cloud to cover and simplify here and there, would have bettered the effect. It is, however, quite possible that the flesh tones may have darkened and the clouds remained light, thereby changing and unduly emphasizing the painter's original intention.

In examining the figures that stand about the balustrade, one questions the entire justice of Burckhardt's and Symonds's strictures. Some of the youthful figures are brilliantly beautiful; to say that they are fauns is to say hardly enough, for if Michelangelo's people are fitted to strive and suffer for the Almighty, these may surely sing his praises.

If we consider them technically, we recognize Correggio's debt to Mantegna, and note that the Parmesan looked closely indeed at those elephant-riding, candelabrum-lighting youths of the "Triumph of Cæsar," and it is interesting to see how instinctively this painter of the delicately joyous, even of

the ecstatic, noted and assimilated the more delightful qualities of the proud, severe, and somewhat hard Paduan master. The draperies in the Duomo frescoes — as so often in other works of Correggio — are in many cases bad; but the old men who wear them, bending backward against the balustrade, are much finer and less sentimental in the originals than in the translations of Toschi.

In San Giovanni Evangelista the saints of the pendentives are more carefully and closely studied than those of the Duomo, though they are not so free and bold; in the cupola the Saint John kneeling on his mountain summit is no longer the plump, good-natured, half-apostle, half-Hercules affected by Correggio, but an emaciated seer of visions whose fire and beauty go far to redeem the painter from the charge that his old men are not virile.

Nevertheless, the more one studies it, the more one feels that in spite of its confusion, the Assumption of the Duomo is a greater and riper work than the Ascension in San Giovanni, and yields Correggio's truest title to fame. In blithe force, spontaneity, and invention, perhaps most of all in daring, it is unequalled, and its painter might sign it Antonius Audax as well and quite as aptly as Antonius Lætus.

If Correggio's true throne was in the Cathedral of

Parma, we must not forget that he subjugated Europe for three centuries after his death by his smaller works: his six great altar-pieces, which include the "Night" and the "San Girolamo," and his mythological pictures, such as the Antiope, Leda, and Danaë, and his various Holy Families.

In his larger works he rules most potently by power and sweep, in his smaller ones by charm. There are those, and we are among them, who find many of his Madonnas of the lesser panels insipidly sweet, but there is magic in the poorest of them and in several of the large altar-pieces this magic is all-compelling. Nevertheless we find in them the same faults as in the frescoes. There is the same indifference to grandeur of line, the same absence of severity of any kind, the same carelessness in the drawing and composition of drapery. It would be hard to discover in the range of Italian art a more ill-composed bit of draping than that of Saint Joseph in the "Scodella Madonna." Too often the master placed entirely lovely heads upon bodies whose silhouette was most awkward, the lack of grace proceeding especially from two causes, — the tendency to throw out the hip in a *desinvoltura* which results in lack of equilibrium or at least of stability, and his love of foreshortening, which now and again makes Madonna upon her throne unpleasantly high-kneed and thickset in appearance. The modern character

of many of his figures is astonishing; that of the Magdalen, for instance, in the "San Girolamo," while certain details such as the white-capped girl in the "Nativity" of Dresden seem like bits out of an eighteenth-century picture. Undoubtedly this is because the painters of the *seicento* and *settecento* admired and were greatly influenced by him. Another peculiarity is his indifference to the conventional types of sacred and holy personages, and which is more noticeable in his altar-pieces than in his frescoes.

Very secular performances are some of them; the San Giorgio altar-piece of Dresden, for instance, in which the figure of John the Baptist is perhaps the most notable example of the artist's strange conception of a saintly personage. Could any one recognize the Precursor in this tall youth, round-hipped as a woman, pointing to the Christ-child and turning his face to the spectator with a smile more than half mocking, as if he found the whole thing an excellent piece of diversion. This time we have a faun indeed, a faun with goatskin and all, and with undoubtedly a wholly unascetic and natural aptitude for locusts and wild honey. The delightful baby in the foreground has no room in him for anything but mischief; the Christ-child, held by a squat and ill-composed Madonna, is in playful mood, everybody is *débonnaire* except Saint Francis, who is sentimental and will be admired and imitated by seventeenth-cen-

tury painters. Saint George, the eponym of the picture, is frank and virile, and for a wonder Correggio has set him firmly on his legs, *il est bien campé*, the French would say. Only too often Correggio lets his standing figures sway like the John Baptist aforesaid, or tumble about as do Jerome in the "Giorno," and Joseph in the "Scodella."

The background of the picture is full of architectural ornaments which Mantegna would have chastened greatly; here surely are reservations enough, and yet the San Giorgio altar-piece even in a black and white reproduction is beautiful from one corner to the other. Indeed, it shows well in black and white, for the Dresden Correggios have suffered in color, while the "Scodella" and the "Giorno," which Parma has retained, have been better treated, — that is to say, less retouched, than some of the former.

They vary under varying conditions; in fair weather the San Girolamo or "Giorno," as it is often called, is golden and beautiful, and there is no doubt in any weather about the charm of the very modern-looking Magdalen, or the *morbidezza* in the treatment of her face, and of the Christ-child's foot which she presses against her cheek, but on dark days the flesh seems brown in the shadows, and the whole picture has a gummy look, while in the "Scodella" the orange drapery is heavy in color and the blue is raw. On the whole the "Deposition" and the

"Martyrdom of Flavius and Placida," both of which are also in the Pinacoteca, while much less sympathetic in character, are better and more Correggio-like in color.

Correggio's indifference to grand lines is constantly seen both in his bodies and his draperies. Michelangelo, Raphael, or Titian would not have tolerated the awkward lines in the "Antiope" of the Louvre, yet it is very beautiful because of the color which is Correggio's at his best point in oil-painting.

It is not easy to write of Allegri's color; there seems to be nothing to particularize save in the frescoes, where he has made a rainbow of opalescent cloud and opalescent flesh. In his best easel pictures it is at once natural and golden; apparently his draperies meant nothing to him, his flesh everything. There is with him none of the organ tone of Byzantine or Venetian color; there are, if the musical simile may be followed, no sudden changes, no bursts from minor into major; nor does Correggio say with Veronese: "I will compose in great masses of blue and red and yellow brocades until I have a bouquet of gorgeous tints," he is satisfied with warm, healthy flesh; he is not grandly mysterious like Rembrandt, yet he steeps his whole canvas in a light-filled medium which penetrates and goes behind things just as it does in Dutch pictures, only with

Correggio these things are flying angels instead of Flemish cobblers cross-legged on counters, nymphs and cupids in place of peasants at a kermesse.

Out of these nymphs and cupids the master made the material of his third cycle of frescoes in Parma, that of the Camera di San Paolo.

The room is square with a high sixteen-sided, vaulted roof. Correggio has borrowed Mantegna's trellis-work from the "Madonna della Vittoria" and has trained it all over the vaulting. Each of the sixteen ribbed spaces terminates below with a lunette and is pierced in the centre with an oval; through these ovals look the cupids in groups of twos; in the lunettes are the nymphs and other mythological personages, in very pleasing monochrome chiaroscuro. The cupids are more thickset and less lovely than are the children of the Duomo and San Giovanni, but they are full of life.

These frescoes, say the guidebooks, "are better preserved than are Correggio's others;" so in a way they are, but though they have kept their surface, they have darkened, been smoked, perhaps, and the color has lost its freshness far more than upon the crumbling stucco of the Duomo's cupola.

We have said that in Correggio's frescoes he rules by power, in his easel pictures by compelling charm. To say how compelling, one has only to recount their migrations and vicissitudes. Signor Ricci

gives chapters to their odyssey, and even a briefest epitome of some of their adventures is interesting.

By the year 1580 or so Italians had forgotten all about *quattrocento* masters; the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, on the contrary, were treasured, and no pictures were more loved at home or coveted abroad than Correggio's. They were covertly stolen, openly seized, and captured on the battlefield in the enemy's baggage; they were the cause of riots, of deputations; they endangered the safety of cities; they were carried to Paris by republicans and to Stockholm by sovereigns; worst of all, were mercilessly cleaned, restored, and overpainted.

Let us take the six great altar-pieces, — the Nativity, the St. Sebastian, the St. George, the St. Francis, the Scodella, and the San Girolamo. The four first went to Dresden as a result of the famous purchase made by the Elector of Saxony from the Duke of Modena in 1746.

The St. Francis was painted in 1515 for a monastery in the town of Correggio, Allegri's birthplace. It remained *in situ* till 1638; then Jean Boulanger, a French painter and envoy of the Duke of Modena (sovereign of Correggio), installed himself in the church to make a copy and soon after departed. A little later it was rumored that he had carried off the picture, the St. Francis. The citizens rang the

alarm bell, went in deputation to Molza, the Duke's representative, and denounced the theft of the altar-piece; Molza wrote to the Duke and laughed in his sleeve: presently the picture appeared openly in the ducal collection.

As for the St. Sebastian, somewhat before 1611 Ercole dell' Abate exposed it to the sun to "make its colors blend;" another artist "repaired it;" then Flaminio Torri repainted it almost entirely; last of all, it was "scratched" during transportation to Dresden, says Raphael Mengs, and restored in that city; when Palmaroli removed the overpaints, he brought to light cherubs' heads which had wholly disappeared. It is no wonder that the Dresden altar-pieces have lost somewhat of Allegri's color.

The beautiful "Nativity" more popularly known as Correggio's "Night" was ordered by Alberto Pratoneri for a church in Reggio and finished in 1530. Already in 1587 the Estensi coveted it, trying to secure it by negotiation, and a century later they stole it outright.

The "Madonna of San Giorgio," the secular character of which as a picture we have already mentioned, was painted for the *Scuola* of Saint Peter Martyr in Modena, and was therefore directly under the claws of the covetous Este dukes; the ambassador of the latter to the French court promised the picture to the Abbé Dubois in return for diplomatic

service; the Duke disavowed the promise, though the frightened envoy declared that the refusal might cost him the city of Mirandola. Twenty years later the Duke forcibly removed the work from the church to his private gallery, and thus four of these famous altar-pieces passed by way of Modena to Dresden.

The San Girolamo, the "Day" of Correggio, remained in the church of Sant' Antonio till the beginning of the eighteenth century; then as the church was rebuilding, and funds were lacking, the Preceptor wished to sell the picture, but Duke Francesco Farnese refused to permit the sale. Later it was reported that two kings were disputing for the picture's purchase; then Don Philippe de Bourbon, Duke of Parma, placed it in the Accademia. There it seemed safe, but in 1796 it made the journey to Paris with the other masterpieces. Francesco Rosaspina wrote of it: "The princes have lost all power of guiding us. They cannot foresee things which those of low rank would not fail to perceive and prepare against. And *we* have to pay the penalty of their folly! I am so overcome that I seem to have lost my wits and appetite together!" In 1815, however, it returned to Milan, and a year later to Parma, this time to stay.

The last picture of the series, the "Madonna della Scodella," was the most fortunate of all, escaping

the attempts made to carry it off until 1796, when it went to Paris, but came back with the San Girolamo.

The chroniclers and Vasari in particular have woven a kind of romance about Correggio; he has been represented as miserably poor, and entirely self-made, having had no artistic environment. Vasari recounts the famous story that, having been paid sixty *scudi* in copper, Antonio tried to carry them on foot to his native town of Correggio, and that from heat and fatigue he contracted a fever of which he died. This factitious and unnecessary enhancement of the interest attaching to him must be renounced. He was born about 1494, and towards 1534 his father, Pellegrino Allegri, who possessed a very fair landed property, gave a suitable dowry to the daughter of Antonio, who also inherited from his maternal uncle, Francesco Aromani. After the death of Correggio the governor of Parma, Alessandro Caccia, wrote to the Duke of Mantua, "I hear that he has made comfortable provision for his heirs." This disposes at once of the stories of exaggerated poverty and of exaggerated prosperity which various writers have told concerning the family of the painter. His artistic success was commercially considerable, though not what it should have been. He had an important commission when he was still a minor, and was kept busy through all

his short life, counting very great personages among his patrons.

As for his artistic environment, the theory now accepted is that he derived from the Ferrarese school; he visited Mantua and was powerfully influenced by the great Mantegna, and although it is probable that he never saw Rome, it is still more probable that he did have a suggestion and more than a suggestion of Raphael's and Michelangelo's great creations through *repliche*, drawings and engravings of their works. It must be remembered that the character of the genius of the Roman school was such that a drawing or a black and white reproduction of one of its masterpieces might act as an inspirational force of highest order, whereas the works of Giorgione and Titian, depending as they do upon qualities which cannot be perfectly translated into black and white, have to be seen to be stimulating. Raphael's works were popularized by engraving at an early date, and his Sistine Madonna could be seen in Piacenza, which was almost at Correggio's doors, but even if our master had access to no others, the frescoes and easel pictures of Mantegna would in themselves have sufficed to inspire an artist of Correggio's calibre, while the works of Leonardo must in turn have powerfully affected one to whom chiaroscuro was an instinctive means of expression.

Though his own family was so modest in station, Antonio grew up as the *protégé* of Veronica Gambara and close to the refinements of a court. Nothing is more special to Italy of the Renaissance than is the existence of a great number of tiny but cultivated capitals, to which the Weimar of the last century affords a modern parallel. Antonio was protected by Veronica, who was wife of the Lord of Correggio, and he was even one of the witnesses to the betrothal settlement of Chiara di Gianfrancesco da Correggio when she was affianced to Ippolito, the son of Veronica. Veronica Gambara was an intimate friend and correspondent of Isabella d'Este, "the great marchioness," the most famous lady of her time in North Italy, and it is highly probable that when Antonio went to Mantua he was recommended to Isabella by Veronica.

Thus modern research has proved that Vasari wholly mistook the tragedy of Correggio's life, for the tragedy came not from pinching want, but from lack of really adequate appreciation. He was busy, had many patrons, but none of them recognized him for what he was, — the one man who, just as Raphael died, stood ready to take up his succession, in a more modern, less monumental way, in lighter vein, if you will, but powerfully and worthily. When Bembo, boasted connoisseur as he was, saw the works of Antonio, he passed them by unheeding,

and at the meridian of the Renaissance, when great artists were petted by popes and princes, and honored and loved by their fellows, Correggio, at the very time that he was making not only his native town, but also his provincial capital of Parma, immortal, was himself, if we compare him with Leonardo, Raphael, or Michelangelo, living in positive obscurity. This neglect could not but astonish a Florentine or a Roman artist who saw his works, and the tradition of it evidently grew into the legend of the tragedy which Vasari recounts, the story of the copper *scudi*. That Antonio did suffer from the inability to give entire vent to his artistic endeavor is only too well proved by the fact that he never went to Rome, Florence, or further afield than Mantua, although in Parma itself, if we reckon wall surface as a criterion, few painters have had an ampler opportunity, while hardly any have used it so well. But complete appreciation was what he lacked, and the latter part of his life was evidently saddened by the lack of sympathy of his Parmesan patrons. The monks did not spare criticism of his frescoes in the Duomo, and leaving his work unfinished, Correggio, this mighty master whose name counts among the six or eight most famous in the history of art, retired to his obscure native town and ended his days there.

But if the work in the Cathedral was too original

too new, not to shock the Parmesan clergy, if a canon satirizing its one weakness and blind to its power could call it "a hash of frogs," there soon came those trained to discern and who, having eyes, saw. "Reverse the cupola and fill it with gold," said Titian, "and even that will not represent its worth." "Raphael himself has not equalled it," wrote Agostino Caracci. The astonishing Giambattista Tiepolo, last of the great Italian masters, came to look and learn, and he is less astonishing when we have seen what he saw. "Have Correggio's Putti grown up yet and walked out of their frames?" Guido Reni was wont to ask, whenever he met a citizen of Modena, the town which held so many of Antonio's masterpieces. These men knew Correggio for what he was, one who had aided Leonardo and Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian, to place the topmost stones of the shrine which Italy builded to the arts.

# Part II

# PERUGIA

# PERUGIA

## I

PERUGIA on the map is like the Griffin of its escutcheon, a great tile-scaled dragon upon its rock crouching over the country and extending long paws down the valley side. Its head was once the citadel of Pope Paul III. built upon the site of the demolished Baglioni palaces, but the citizens in 1848 drew its teeth first, and then decapitated it. Its right paw, we must imagine to have partly supported its head and to now be doubled up over the modern Piazza d' Armi and hanging down the slope below; its extended left paw stretches far above the rock to the gates of Saint Jerome and the Ghezzi. The palaces of the Commonwealth and of the Captain of the People are its main vertebrae; one hind-paw lays its claws upon San Francesco, one passes out beyond the gate of the Sun, while the long undulating ridge that goes from the Augustan gate to that of Sant' Angelo, serves admirably for the monster's tail, and just as the tail of an Etruscan chimæra ends often in a serpent's head, thus at the Angel

gate there is a tall brick tower battlemented and machicolated to sting and bite the enemies of Perugia.

There is nothing modern in the old city; there is Etruscan Perugia with its walls and gates; Roman Perugia, its masonry springing undistinguishable from the earlier courses, then becoming characterized as it grows; mediæval Perugia of the Baglioni built upon Roman foundations; Renaissance Perugia of the Popes, reared upon the ashes of Baglioni palaces; but there is no modern Perugia, there is no quarter planned for the capture of the stranger who has his sole sanctuary in the Brufani, excellent among Italian *alberghi*. There is perhaps an hundred feet of the main street swept and garnished for the tourist, gently swept, however, and garnished with old-time furnishings, of which the most modern feature is a smart, glass-fronted cake-shop, and even there the traveller is dispossessed by the *signori uffiziali*, the cavalry officers who sit resplendent and eat the cakes.

From every point around the town, the views are magnificent; from the Piazza d' Armi to the south and west and from the parapeted quarter of Porta Sole behind San Severo they are superlatively magnificent; within, no large town of Italy is so wildly picturesque; one holds the breath in making the statement, but does not recall it. It is not a pictu-

resqueness of noble and beautifully ornamented forms, as in Verona, Venice, or Siena, but rather of accident, of irregularity, of rising and falling ground, of wonderful effects of light and shade and color. Everywhere one climbs or burrows. Everywhere save upon the spinal ridge the streets are on one side staircases which descend, on the other staircases which mount; nearly every vista is broken by arches crossing some narrow way to buttress or carry tall houses — arches which are apt to frame some grand picture of olive-covered hills and distant mountains. Add to this that there is color everywhere; yellows, reds, warm and cool grays, which take on many tones from the diversity of material employed, for in nearly every wall you find stones great and small, round and square, brick of every variety and color, put together without the least apparent choice. Probably it is because in little Perugia, left away behind the times in the race of cities, there has been no temptation to build since the sixteenth century, so that rebuilding has been only repatching and the nearest stone has filled the need and stopped the gap. From all this there results a picturesqueness of color delightful to any one and especially to the artist who longs for a varied surface which in painting may be handled brilliantly. The eye wanders over it always with pleasure, but it wanders without finding a resting place and after

a while one longs for the concentration that comes in looking at the nobler forms of Florence or the more exquisite forms of Venice.

Of course we refer to the plastic: nature here is the model for the grand backgrounds of Perugino, but within the walls, one asks after a while whether Perugia contains anything of the very first order, and begins to weary of the vast number of things of the third and fourth rank that interest, but leave no wish for serious study.

The question is soon answered in the affirmative. Perugia contains two works of art of the very first interest and beauty, no mean possession for so small a town: the Sala del Cambio of Perugino, and the Etrusco-Roman gate called the Porta Augusta; and in addition to these it owns a noble town hall, the fascinating façade of San Bernardino, and Raphael's fresco of San Severo, — all possessing interest of what a French critic has called *premier-second ordre.* The Porta Augusta is one of the finest gates in the world; it beetles in black magnificence, like a cliff, above a whole quarter of the town. Its stones are dark with the deposits of centuries of dust and rain, and blackened by the fire that followed the footsteps of Lucius Antonius as his followers fell backward along the steep streets before the soldiers of the young Octavius. Black is the color of decay, it fears the light, and when the sun shines half the

effectiveness is gone, but in the damp and gloom when mist is flying through the streets this gate is stupendous. No beauty of decoration could surpass the heavy stone bucklers and splaying fluted pilasters that make up the frieze or the plain letters which, each as tall as a man and following the rounding of the Arch, announce simply *Augusta Perusia*. Standing in the doorway of the little church below you may look up and winking hard once or twice, may see, far above, the three feathers in the casque of some Etruscan Volumnius or the steel jugulars of Roman helmets as the guards lean on the wall. These Umbrian cities seem so Roman that in the green vineyards an hundred feet below the Via Pinturicchio, yet so near at hand, a rusty buckler with the thunderbolt upon it would appear to be the most natural find possible.

Only a month or two before our last visit to Perugia they unearthed armor, trinkets, and a woman's skeleton close by San Pietro. They are shown now in the Etruscan Museum. "*Che dentatura!*" said the *custode*, pointing at the skull; and truly "what teeth" they were! — even, brilliant, stronger, how many times stronger, than iron, since they had resisted twenty centuries, were unimpaired, and each one in its place, while helmet and thorax-piece were poor leprous-looking things with jagged, eaten edges. We added those teeth to our mental pic-

ture, flashing broad smiles from under the dark Etruscan gate, in days when Perugia was one of "the Twelve," and Rome not yet thought of as a rival. The arch begins below with the masonry of Etruria, and passes to that of Rome. Close by it a mighty wall once safeguarded and still buttresses whole quarters of the town. Three minutes to the west of the gate if you follow the Street of the University you come to a long walk raised upon arches, bordered by a stone parapet at either side, and which, starting as the Via del Acquedotto, follows the line of the dragon's body until as the Via Appia it disappears under a Gothic archway, then climbs to the heart of the town.

Upon this strange Appian Way, this aqueduct street, abut now and then little houses which seem less comfortless than some of their fellows, since they are raised high and dry and are shut in on three sides by an amphitheatre of buildings; to carry out the simile of the Griffin, they crouch under his western ribs. While we are with the antique monuments we may as well follow the tail of the monster straight to its end through a quarter, mean, but beautiful in the color of its masonry, to the fortress gate of the Angel and another Roman souvenir, the round church of Sant' Angelo, who is of course Messer San Michele, but who masquerades in Mars's costume upon

Vesta's property. So the guide-book said at least, with its readiness to call all round temples Vestal. This special building has been accredited also to Venus and to Vulcan, but we had read neither Dennis nor Lanciani nor anybody else about the derivation of the church, and in our first visit simply accepted the invitation of three Perugians (they may have footed up sixteen years among them) to see San Michele, and entered.

The building stands in a still, open, green place, is as desolate as those engine-house-looking baptisteries of Ravenna, has just such a forbidding shell, but inside, unlike the Ravennese examples, is equally rough. There are no mosaics; there are only sixteen columns in a circle, mostly of African marble; once there were many more of them, but they have been borrowed from Michael (or stolen from Vesta?) by other saints, notably Peter, who is *in casinense* at the other end of the town. Between each couple of the solemn shafts that support the arches is stuck a flat, painted, pasteboard pot of flowers with overlapping and curled up edges; what a deal of leisure time there has been in Italy (no two bouquets are alike) for the production of these sublime effects! The church was so warm and comfortable that it seemed as if the *fuoco inestinguibile* of Vesta had warmed it forever, but looking up at the wooden roof we realized that it was

the sacred fire surely enough, but from the outside, that had done it all. Of course we looked at Saint Michael or Sant' Angelo as well. He wore *papier mâché* wings, a cloth of silver tunic, and a modern cuirassier's helmet, and with these and his girlish face suggested light cavalry, angels, and Joan of Arc. "This is the antique table," said the portress showing a wide slab of marble now raised as an altar; "here is the place for the fire to burn the martyrs." Naturally a good churchwoman would think of no better use for Vesta's flame, and in this Etruscan neighborhood, who knows? there were plenty of prisoner-martyrs long before Christianity.

We passed out under the gate tower, handsome in its ruddy brick, and the one small boy who had followed proposed that we should skirt the wall eastward a bit and "in a giardinetto see Madonna," but we preferred to see Thrasymene lying like a shining jade stone under the mist between the northern hills. Westward too the view was lovely, battlemented wall again with the inevitable termination of church and convent, and the Scirre tower rising above all, while a puff of smoke in the valley beneath showed, said our baby, "the house where the train goes" — "*la casa dove va il treno.*" We re-entered the gates, our infant departed with the *soldo* which his arts had beguiled from us, and as we saw the bucklers of the arch again, so soon after Vesta's

Michael-church, we thought that "hail to the fire that burns for aye and the shields that fell from heaven" would do as well in Perugia as on the seven hill-tops.

You go down the right hind paw, the north-western one, of the Griffin to reach San Bernardino; one may pass straight along the Via dei Priori, or behind a palace which shows graffiti ornament of exceptional richness and much elegance. Close at hand you pass under the "Majesty of the arches," "*La maestà dei volti*," superb remnants of a portion of the mediæval Town Hall burnt in the sixteenth century; it is quite impossible to reproduce it in photograph or drawing, since one must look right upward in the gloom at these grand brown fragments, dramatic in their half-calcined masonry and almost equalling the Augustan arch in effect. The street of the Priors is, like others, a long vista of picturesqueness; slanting steeply, winding about, with Sant' Agata on the left, Perugino's house in the Via Deliziosa, the tall Scirre tower, the handsome, little Renaissance church of "Our Lady of Light," fine views of distant wall and climbing streets, and at last a piazza with San Francesco in brown brick, and the *Oratorio*.

When San Bernardino preached on the square of the Duomo the whole population cried *Misericordia*, repented, and gave him their jewels, and he

built his bonfire of Vanities three quarters of a century before Savonarola. The façade of his chapel is delicately lovely rather than impressive in its pale blue and red and yellowy white. The tongues of fire about the saint and the long vertical lines separating the surrounding angels from the centre are clumsily managed for an artist who composed the rest of his façade so well. It is strange that the angels with slits for mouths and button-holes for eyes and drapery of molasses candy at an interesting stage of pulling, should be so very alluring, but alluring they are. The virtues too, and other angels again who play the rebec or hurry along with tiny drums, suggest some Renaissance pack of playing-cards and are filled with the perilous fascination of mannerism. They are all by Agostino Fiorentino, whom one meets in Modena, and learns to know intimately in the Malatesta church at Rimini.

The excursion covering the extended left forepaw of the Griffin is one of the longest. From his hotel the traveller crosses the square behind the Prefecture and goes down the steep streets Marzia and Lomellina, and in three minutes he is an hundred feet below the square. It is all absurdly like a stage setting, but a very massive setting, scenic in its whole arrangement: above tower the bastions with their winding approach, still higher are the

Prefecture and Brufani, and a half-hexagon of pink stucco. At the right, against the rock, its roof just on a level with the bases of the houses above, itself raised on a pedestal of *rampes*, is the octagonal church of Saint Herculanus; far above at the left a grand, battered antique arch is encrusted with all its sculptures in the masonry of San Gallo's bastion; a fine fountain is just in front of you at the base of the terraces; and to make it all quite perfect in its picturesqueness, peasants in gay colors come pouring down a steep street-stairway from under an arch in the Etruscan wall. St. Herculanus, good in lines and named for the bishop who stood a "seven years' siege" and died at the hands of his conqueror Totila, has been covered with gewgaw eighteenth-century painting. The high altar, looking out from amid paper roses and gilded wood, is an Etruscan sarcophagus with lions at the angles and the ridges between the flutings oxidized to a beautiful orange. On either end of the sarcophagus is a *bestiarius* urging or spearing a wild animal; the lions are peculiarly bold, and the altar is one of the good things in Perugia. San Domenico, a little further down the street, looks flayed without and is whitewashed within upon its ugly and late piers; the tomb of Benedict XI., famous in the history of early sculpture, is its treasure and the host of the transmarine pil-

grim. Good Gothic wells abound in this quarter of the city and make the street interesting as one passes along to its end, where San Pietro raises its hybrid but rather graceful campanile, its apse abutting upon the open country at a great height above it and looking directly towards Assisi.

San Pietro is an ecclesiastical picture gallery, such an one as Santa Maria in Organis of Verona, Santa Maria alle Grazie of Milan, or Santa Cecilia in Venice. When the papal troops entered Perugia in 1859, the clergy of San Pietro sided with the people against them, and so the city left to the priests their treasure of pictures. This treasure is over-lavish in its expenditure. There is hardly a yard of plain surface left to repose the eye, everything is covered with scroll-work or subjects, some of the columns even having figures painted upon them, while a special feature of the church is the introduction of huge oil paintings, well enough in color but architectonically most unusual and unhandsome, each in a gold frame, and each covering an *entire bay* of the nave, from the top of the nave arches to the brilliant red, blue, and gold coffered ceiling. The sacristan recites the roll of painters, great or obscure, and then leads one to the choir-stalls, which are beautiful indeed. Perugia is rich in carved wood, and these stalls are world-famous.

As usual, the little mountain town of Bergamo

has a good share in the glory. These carvings have been popularized by reproduction, are familiar to architects and decorators, and are worthy of a long visit for their invention, fancy, richness, and delicacy; nevertheless the sacristan who shows them is daily afflicted. He opens some shutters at the centre of the choir with the intention of showing some inlaid woodwork pictures, not nearly so well worth looking at as the carving, but marvels of unreality and unreasonableness, and therefore to his mind wonders of skill. Unfortunately (for him) the shutters open from this damp choir upon the mountains of Assisi. "*Guardi*," he says, "*bellissimi!*" "*Bellissimi, davvero!*" the visitor replies with a deep breath. "No, no, the pictures," he insists; but he has let heaven's glory in all at once or earth's, which is the same thing, only reflected back, and his sightseers crowd out upon the balcony and look at Assisi quivering in the warm, sun-filled air, at Spello shining on its farther hill, at piled-up, glistening Trevi, and have no hunger for more pictures on that day's walk.

The rambles under the walls of Perugia are without exception wonderful. We made the tour of the whole town and repeated some of our excursions; perhaps the most remarkable is that on the western side from the Porta Susanna near San Francesco, to the Eburnea, the Ivory gate. The path describes

the hollow of a great horseshoe, and everywhere the houses tower above, growing for two-thirds of the distance directly from bases of Etruscan masonry which often runs up to half the height of the buildings. It strikes the imagination of the American, who is an old settler if he counts a score of years of residence in one place, that these Perugians should to-day pay monthly rent for houses built in good part two thousand years ago!

The views are successive marvels of picturesqueness, and always in sight for a focal point, the apse of some church abuts upon the precipice. Between the horseshoe of house-topped wall and the Palazzo Pubblico there are whole climbing labyrinths of strangest narrow lanes, streets of the Moon, of Silence, of the Bear, of Darkness, of Good Changes, and in their midst, in the "Delicious Street" are the picturesque little house and courtyard of Perugino. "*Niente dentro*" nothing inside, said a passer; nevertheless we stopped and sketched it without and within. Upon the Palace of the Taddei in Florence, an inscription tells us, "Here Raphael stayed as guest in 1505," and we know that he climbed the stone stairs there, but he seems somehow more real climbing the steep streets of Perugia to Perugino's house, or we may see him a few years later, going to paint his first fresco in San Severo, echoing there the work of his tonsured comrade of Florence, Baccio

della Porta, and foreshadowing his own great composition of the *Disputà*. He went hence, indeed, to that larger career which called him, leaving the wall half uncovered, until, many years after, Perugino painted a row of saints along the lower masonry; these latter have been severely criticised, and people who are entertained by drawing morals may point out that Pietro's saints stand upon the earth, while Raphael's have attained the empyrean; but Perugino was an old man, and if he blinks here a little so close to the rays of the rising sun, at least he is not quite the owl that abuse would make him out, since he himself was one of the first to hail those rays; yet it must be confessed that his saints here are poor and feeble repetitions of those he painted in his best days.

The quarter about San Severo is wildly picturesque; the Via Matteoli might be called a cave which climbs a hill, and as you walk these streets some Perusino a few paces before you suddenly disappears in trap-door fashion; he has dropped down into his courtyard or garden by means of half a dozen steep steps. It is absurd, this disappearance, and can hardly be realized until seen, but it suggests that Perugia's constant brawling may in part have come from the fact that the configuration of the ground yielded points in every quarter of the city that were natural fortresses easily defensible against

anything save overwhelming force. The view from the platform near by San Severo, looking eastward, for this is the northeast quarter of the town, is only less beautiful, less grand in its vast panorama than that from the Piazza d' Armi. As you walk down the eastern declivity, a level line of houses, an artificial precipice upon a natural one rises above you, tower and wall and foundation of church ascend as you descend, almost as rapidly as painted towers of stage scenery are craned upward into the flies; until you reach the Pinturicchio Street and the long Bersaglieri Corso, a quarter of the poor, but seemingly built of nuggets of pure gold, so rich is it in colors, tawny, russet, ferruginous; no wonder Perugino's foregrounds, even, swam in a medium of "*oro potabile.*' Outside the Bersaglieri gate there are bastions again and heavily buttressed wall, and a few hundred feet to eastward the road turns sharply and runs between olive-covered slopes down to the little booth-lined street that leads to the votive church of Madonna di Monte Luce with its rough but effective façade, its pretty courtyard, and its befrescoed interior. Once there you turn your face towards Perugia; it is superb, and seen thus from the eastward at its maximum of length, the outlying quarters push so far along the hills that it looks a town of seventy-five thousand inhabitants.

San Pietro lies far away to the southeast, then

comes the skeleton San Domenico; the Gran Piazza rises like a bluff to the right, and is continued by the spine of the city till another quarter drops sheerly down from the Piazza delle Prone with Santa Maria Nuova rising on its slope, the piazza upheld by huge arches which change gradually into the straight courses of grand Etrurian blocks, till they turn an angle and pass out of sight toward the Augustan gate, emerging again directly under the apse of Sant' Agostino, and following the precipice always till the pyramidal top of Sant' Angelo is followed by the mass of the Angel gate, which ends Perugia at the northeast.

We went home from Monte Luce by the broad, well-made road under the eastern wall, with a changing succession of views to left and right. Now and then a man or woman, stopping for a while, chatted with some friend framed in a window far up the rock side, chatted in the clear, musical Perugian that is so easy to understand after the Florentine patois; for when Dante there in Porta Sole by San Severo sang of the Umbrian country or when he spoke in San Gimignano he left his language rather with Perugia and Siena than in his own Mercato Vecchio.

Among these views from below the walls one of the most striking is the sight of what we must call the prow of Perugia, a great bastion towering above

one, pushing magnificently into the southern valley straight toward Rome, sharp almost as a blade, and looking like the beak of a leviathan galley, lying on the heights and waiting to be launched upon the sea of vapor that so often swims beneath.

Upon shoulders, spine, and haunches, the Griffin bears its greatest treasures: the Sala del Cambio; the Public Palace; the Fountain; the Augustan gate; there, too, are Bishopric and Cathedral, and the Palace of the Captain of the People. For a few hundred feet the monster presents a nearly level backbone which has been christened the Corso Vanucci; at the head of it are the Prefecture, Brufani, and a second hotel in an old palace and belonging also to Brufani; a very short train of bright, little shops under ancient houses follows, then the Cambio, the Public Palace, and the great Square.

All else of Perugia, save the parallel street of Sopra Mura, its hospital and palace of the People's Captain, is up hill or down dale; even the Sopra Mura (on the walls) is, as its name indicates, built on arches, else it would sink into the valley.

The Gran Piazza is one of those strange, irregular and picturesque places so frequently found at the heart of Italian towns. The Palazzo Pubblico is so fine that it would be in the very front rank of town-halls, were it not that Italy holds such surpassing examples as the Vecchio of Florence, the Mangia

of Siena, the Ducale of Venice, in that same front rank. The great stairway and platform on the northwestern side, absent when we first saw the building, have been restored, adding much to the general effect and the only details upon the palace front which jar a little are the lombard-looking gables or string courses above the upper windows. In all the vast Noah's Ark of heraldic beasts there are few brutes more deserving of prizes than are the Griffin of Perugia, and the Lion of the Guelphic people, which are bracketed high above the doorway. They are superb in their style, in their lank ferocity and savage alertness; one looks up at their green bronze and hears the clank of armor, smells smoke, sees tumbling palaces, and listens to the axe-strokes falling on the chains at city gates. Chains of cities' gates, of Assisi and Perugia, they guarded indeed until in 1796 the French Republicans did a bit of work in the interest of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity by quietly stealing them in the night, and removing at once an opportunity for Perugian jeering and Assisan chafing. The fine fountain, the boast of all Perugians, and standing between the Palazzo Pubblico and the Cathedral, unites famous names; for Fra Bevignate called Arnolfo di Lapo and the Pisani to help him with the sculpture; it is most interesting in detail, but would be finer, it seemed to us, as a great double well-curb without the upper

cup and bronze nereids at the top, which, though good in themselves, compose ill with the rest and give a somewhat trivial character to the general form. The cathedral is as hideous as if the blood which had stained it had blighted it; without, the golden color of its naked brick saves it from absolute ugliness, but within it is structurally bad; the octagonal piers rise nearly to the top of the church before the arches spring; the clerestory is just under the roof; the whole interior is tawdry with new, gay colors in vile patterns. Even the bells have learned their lesson of the tocsin: how can such ring glad messages? We thought that we loved all bells, but when these rang a peal for the festival of Saint Herculanus, they clanged murder, and sack, and fire, in a wild hammering minor, which, after the grand brazen voices of Florence, seemed the very tongue of discord. It was no fancy founded on Matarazzo's blood-dripping chronicle that made us hear them thus, but a very real quality in the bells. If they sounded so in the fifteenth century, one may not wonder at Bonfigli's and Caporali's angels with faces as awry as their tones, and it is well that the chimes, (save the mark)! are rung rarely to-day.

After all, how could the bells know better in Perugia? The people were traditionally Guelphic from all time, liegemen to the Pope, but in reality

they cuffed and thwacked their suzerain in the person of his legates, and their nobles seem to have held the people's house more in awe than that of Saint Lawrence, for they treated the Palazzo Pubblico with relative respect, and placed their archers and even their artillery in and on the cathedral. Not even Siena rent and tore herself as did Perugia: one reads of it all with bewilderment; Baglioni fighting Oddi till the latter were exterminated, then fighting among themselves, till in the late years of the *quattrocento*, the early years of the *cinquecento*, they battled so constantly that one wonders how Perugino managed to reach his daily work upon the square, that centre of disturbance. We read of fighting all around the palace; of priors asked to be intercessors and prudently barricading themselves instead; nay, dropping large stones from the windows upon those who asked their interference. Matarazzo has written with intensest earnestness of the Baglioni, the "dragon's brood," fierce, beautiful, going to their graves young, blood-stained all, and often with kinsmen's, even brother's, blood; bearing strange names: Ascanius, Troilus Baglioni, Wrong-Head Baglioni, Little Dragon Baglioni. Burckhardt discovered them in Matarazzo, and Symonds has told their story so admirably that it would be superfluous to repeat it.

Within the Palazzo Pubblico on the first floor,

the huge hall called *Sala dei Notari* has a beamed, wooden ceiling supported by eight great arches: along three sides run double ranges of backless seats, very effective in their simplicity. The restored frescoes are curious with fourteenth-century cavaliers and ladies, beasts, men and women delving and spinning, and rows upon rows of tourney helms and escutcheons; the prevailing color is red with a good deal of the mediæval blue; the decoration, typically Tuscan, presents a most striking ensemble, the room ranking with great halls in the Palazzi of Siena and Pistoja, and somewhat recalling the Ragione of Padua. In the second story is the Pinacoteca, "very important, especially for the study of the Perugian school;" but such galleries, to us at least, are most important as showing how immeasurably superior were Florence, Venice, Rome, Parma, and Milan, the real centres, to the provincial towns.

Where the galleries of other cities count their masterpieces by dozens, Perugia has not one example of the first order, unless the visitor should insist upon a lunette by Perugino, which will rank with his good but not with his best works. Most of Pietro's pictures here belong to his sickly-sweet category; his great works remain below in the Sala del Cambio, though one or two dark-haired Maries in his early manner are earnest and suave.

Domenico Alfani, an eclectic who sank all his personality in that of others, has a picture done from designs by Raphael. Here a new presence is felt; the color is black, but in Madonna's movement and in the strong, young body of the Christ-child, naïf fervor and delicate grace are replaced by a large freedom and a long, undulatory yet simple arrangement of lines. The other local artists are inferior to their Tuscan contemporaries; the *custode* expends many *bellissimi* on the large tabernacle of Pinturicchio, but it is rather dry and hard; the artist was far more at home upon a great wall surface. The Mannis are better, and are good and delicate reminders of his master Perugino. Bonfigli and Caporali possess a strange attraction. The angels of the former have Botticelli's mannerism in an exaggerated form, without Botticelli's science or fancy or witchery. The type is a curious one; you may see ragged children in London, pale, with glassy-blue eyes, prominent teeth, faded yellow hair, yet with a certain pathetic, stunted promise of beauty, who if crowned with cabbage-roses, worn escoffion-fashion, covered with great jewels and fitted with wings, might, if slightly dislocated and put out of drawing, become Bonfigli angels.

There is no doubt about the decorative quality of many of these pictures: they are always enter-

taining to an unusual degree by their quaint material, and often by their subjects, as in the frescoed history of Sant' Ercolano, and there are gonfalons too in goodly number, for the Umbrians were great banner painters and equalled the Sienese in the generosity which showered pearls and jewelled raiment upon their sacred personages. There is a mine of wealth for the costume-lover in eight works of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, real manuscript-miniatures, which by a whim of the artist have grown into panel-pictures. Here are Baglioni and Oddi and La Staffa, rehearsing, one would say, for some Perugian festival and greatly to their own amusement, the miracles of San Bernardino. They are warrior-dandies, real glasses of fashion. The architecture is of the full Renaissance, very white and forthputting, somewhat overpowering the figures, but the latter are the creations of some yet gothic man-milliner; the hair curls like gold wire and rises in elaborate superimposed ranges of separate locks, the caps perch on one side, hip-pieces protrude, and the sleeves stand up as stiffly as steel brassards. Yet they are captivating, these panels, and more original than the master's large altar-pieces in the next hall.

At least this collection of the Pinacoteca has the true local flavor, almost unaffected by anything extraneous; there is nothing that jars; one has not

constantly to readjust one's self as among the mixed if splendid masterpieces of the *Salon Carré* in the Louvre; this is not only Umbria, but that part of Umbria which turns its face resolutely away from Tuscany and is unaffected by its great Borderers Signorelli and Piero della Francesca; there is sweetness, daintiness, sometimes intensity, and always homogeneity here. Any one of these pictures placed by itself in a house in a rather dark room would be a joy forever as a decorative object; taken in the mass as the material of a great gallery they would soon prove wearisome.

## II

Adjoining the Palazzo Pubblico is the Merchants' Exchange containing its famous frescoes.

Perugino began this cycle in 1499, and seems to have finished it in 1500, though he was not entirely paid till 1507. The Sala del Cambio shows us exactly what the men of the fifteenth century asked and obtained as a complete system of decoration, carried out at one time and under the direction of one mind. As such alone it would be a priceless lesson, but the coincidence of the decoration with one of the best periods of the Renaissance and of the direction with one of its best masters adds such intrinsic value that the little Perugian Exchange deserves to rank among the treasuries of European art. Upon entering it the first impression is one of homogeneousness and completeness. Nothing has been taken away and little added since the first years of the sixteenth century, a time at once of culmination and of transition. In the Sala del Cambio the frame equals the picture, or rather there is no distinction between the two; the whole hall is the frame; the golden brown of the inlaid benches, the cool gray lights and strong shadows

of the carved wood continue and relieve the warm grays, the amber, and the tawny reds and yellows of the frescoes; the pavement is in harmony below, and the vaulting above is covered with that combination of flat-painted figures and scroll-work which is so distinctive of a good art epoch, and is much more truly decorative than are the heavily carved ceilings that prevailed a half-century later. Not one of the frescoes of the Cambio equals the "Crucifixion" of S. Maddalena de' Pazzi, or the "Delivery of the Keys" in the Sistine, but each is richer in color than are the later and more famous works, while taken together the series shows us Perugino in nearly all his phases. A second impression is one of amused surprise at the frankly hybrid character of the frescoes, the result of a mediæval hospitality afforded to a classical new-comer, who could only be an interloper in Umbria. Even here, in the stronghold of pietism, the humanist had come, and had prescribed to Perugino his list of antique virtues and antique prototypes. We may still read the Latin legends of the walls repeated in the manuscript of Francesco Maturanzio.

The artist accepted both the scholarly sponsor and his prescription, and has painted in two panels sages and heroes of Rome and Greece standing all arow and labelled carefully. There has never been

a more strangely incongruous meeting than this of Perugino and Plutarch. Do we see here a Bible interleaved with Ariosto, or have we private theatricals in a convent,—"a mystery" or rather a "morality" play? Pietro, seeking Cincinnatus at the plough, has found a pretty peasant girl instead. Scipio Africanus is a burgess's daughter; she is comely, dull, but rather anxious. Leonidas is a good old maid with a nut-cracker chin and a rickety forehead. Licinius will pass fairly well for a man, and in the other fresco of the "Virtues" the heads are all much finer, Numa, Camillus, and Trajan being thoughtful and dignified and wearing long draperies which support them better — that is to say, give more *base* to the decoration — than do the spindle legs of Leonidas and his companions — legs made to apppear more weedy because Perugino, understanding the spreading character of the steel shoulder-pieces, has bestowed on each hero (!) a broad robust thorax, and in addition compelled him to wear a helmet with a termination like a chandelier. The artist has not troubled himself to compose his figures, but has simply stood them up side by side, and he is right. Nothing is more decorative than formal pattern, and Pietro's wall-pieces with their depth of landscape background required just such vertical foreground figures to hold them up.

For this reason the "Nativity" and "Transfigu-

ration," more congenial as subjects to Perugino, are not quite as decorative as the "Virtues" though they are very nearly so, since in the first, the artist has found his upward-tending lines in his architecture, in the second in his *mandorla.* The fresco of the Sibyls and Prophets has always puzzled us. It is more massed as to color, less open than most of Pietro's work; it is all immensely like Perugino, and at the same time so different from him as to astonish. The treatment is freer and larger than his, the heads are different in expression and character, prouder, graver, more thoughtful, less intense, especially in the Solomon and the Cumaean and Libyan Sibyls. The Tiburtine unfortunately has been spoiled by restoration.

Perugino had assistance with his Cambio frescoes, but what other hand than his, if any, has so altered the character of the Sibyls and Prophets that in spite of himself, Pietro has drawn a step or two nearer to the threshold of that change of things which was coming already in Orvieto, and came in its strength ten years later. The painting of the vaulting shows Pietro's supervision, but was probably executed by assistants; it is architectonically admirable in its graduated importance, its relation to the painting of the walls. Art in central Italy is here still at the point where a room is given a vaulted ceiling suited for receiving a decoration

distinctly subsidiary to that of the wall panels, and this decoration of the Cambio vaulting is lovely. Perugino's gods have come down from their robust Olympus and have grown slim, and mild, and languid in the air of Valdarno. Zeus wears the curled-rimmed hat so dear to Pietro's people, and takes the cup (it is Montepulciano surely) from page Ganymede, whom the eagle stole beyond doubt from the quarter of the esquires in some Malatestian or Montefeltrine castle while Mercury, Venus, Apollo drive up to take their places in some Perugian street procession of mincing deities. About them are wreathed the little decorative figures; they are an important contingent to the art-army, skirmishers upon the edges of the main movement of the action, a pygmy population that has marched down from antiquity and passing through the alembic of the Renaissance, attains by this El Dorado a second immortality of youth. They have formed an alliance with the fauna and flora of a whole conventional world; they dive into trumpet-flowers, they balance upon curving stalks, they emerge from acanthus leaves and clasp together the delicately curling tendrils; they are the "little people" who live in the scroll-work, whether of bronze or marble, fresco or carven panel. If the decorations of Perugino please here by their detail, they may more lastingly and legitimately please by

their homogeneity, and for all its dusky richness, the Sala del Cambio teaches, first of all and most of all, a lesson important indeed to the decorator of whatever epoch, — the lesson of restraint.

Few Italian masters are more universally known than Pietro Vanucci, the Perugian, and yet among lovers of Italian art, he is not always rated highly, even by the least critical of artistic appraisers. The stereotyped character of much of Pietro's work, and a kind of mawkish sentimentality not unoften found in it lessen its value and qualify our admiration. The direct reason for this repetition and insipidity was Perugino's popularity during his life time. This popularity was prodigious, and Pietro, great artist as he was, was not great enough to resist the evil effect of the universal demand for his pictures. Perhaps in all Italy, only Michelangelo's, Raphael's, and Titian's works were so sought after in their own day as were Perugino's in his time. Michelangelo disdained to be commercial. Raphael was filled rather with the desire to create than with the wish to acquire fortune. Titian was often frankly interested, but so superlatively gifted that all that he did partook in some degree of his greatness. Theirs in fact was fame, rather than popularity. Perugino deserved both, as we shall find on studying him critically, and he had the former in some measure, the latter in such a flood that it diluted

his average, so that when every convent wished his work, and the supply of earnest pictures, pictures into which he had put his best capacity, could not equal the demand, he, as it were, watered his talent to increase the volume of his work, and put more sugar into it to take the place of hard study of expression.

This popularity was probably one reason, also, that Pietro's early pictures were among his best; his saints smiling sweetly, musing sweetly, grieving sweetly, were in the beginning serious and sincere for all their sweetness, often gravely sweet, sometimes sweetly ardent. They were the very things that the friars and nuns, the nuns above all, wanted. The people too, of Perugia, who had seen often and again in their battle-filled streets, beauty distorted by fury and grimace upon the faces of their fighting young Baglioni nobles; beauty lying dead and bloody; where in one day twenty-seven youths of that noble house lay stretched upon their cathedral square; these people once within their oratories wanted the mildest of faces on their triptychs, and Perugino, where it was so desired, could paint even a militant hero that should roar you as gently as a sucking dove. What wonder that first Umbria, then all Italy, and lastly transalpine states desired his pictures.

Vasari says that his enormous reduplication of

bottega-work, his feverish love of incessant labor was caused by his memory of early poverty, his fear of future need. It is much more likely that he simply made hay when the sun shone. Filippo Lippi was probably poorer than Pietro had been. Many another artist is likely to have been quite as timid and forecasting as he, but Perugino had the greater success. He could sell a great many more pictures than his fellows, he proposed to furnish them, and, he therefore established a picture-factory in the Via Deliziosa.

The man who is an artist straight through his being can never become wholly mercenary. The wonder and the pity is, that Perugino gave way so much to commerciality, but Pietro is of all painters the most anomalous, far more so than Andrea del Sarto, whose moral excellence has been so disputed, for if in much of Andrea's work there seems to be something lacking, something that keeps it from reaching the highest point the artist was capable of attaining, we cannot quite put our finger upon that something, whereas Perugino's shortcoming is as plain to see as a church by daylight; he deliberately repeated worn-out motives, and allowed inferior work to go upon the market. This anomalousness is puzzling enough, but we are disposed to-day to give him, in the light of certain modern documents, the benefit of a somewhat wider charity than Vasari accorded,

for the Aretine represents him not only avaricious, but atheistic, "his porphyry-hard brain" impervious to all religious influence. Many modern writers, have, as often elsewhere, accepted Vasari's verdict without question, but whatever the general critic may imply by "irreligious," Perugino must have been as a painter at once reverent and sincere during a long period of his life, for his work proves this unmistakably. He was certainly an interesting psychological problem, a protagonist of pietistic art, and yet taxed as an infidel; a man capable of the most dignified and monumental compositions, yet willing to repeat himself and to coin money by the use of worn-out material. His surroundings were as incongruous as the qualities found in his work and attributed to his character, since Perugia was at once the home of religious painting and the closed lists of the most ruffianly nobles in Italy, the Baglioni. Taine is inclined to place Perugino among those who were changed and made sceptical by the apparent failure of Savonarola's prophecies. On his portrait of Francesco delle Opere is inscribed *Timete Deum*, and after all is said neither avarice nor repetition of motives in his pictures proves irreligion in Perugino, and as to his infidelity we have only Vasari's assertion, based doubtless on some such local tradition as Pietro's burial under the oak of Fontignano. Other stories, and even documents

tend to absolve him, and the causes of Perugino's artistic decline may probably as we shall see later, be found in the conditions which governed the evolution of Italian painting.

Among the instances which go far toward disproving the stories of Perugino's avarice and irreligion, is that of his ceding to Santa Maria de' Bianchi, at Castello della Pieve, a picture at one-third the original price. Again, he painted a Saint Sebastian for the church of Panicale; he asked but a very small sum for the picture, and two years later, having lent fourteen painted banners to the same village, he added to the loan the condition that in case the villagers did not care to return him the banners they were to pay the remainder of the sum due on the Saint Sebastian. In a word, it was a way of presenting the banners to Panicale. On the other hand, Pietro sometimes undertook to drive a hard bargain even with the wardens of a cathedral, as at Orvieto, and in Venice he demanded for frescoes to be done in the Ducal Palace more than double what afterward satisfied Titian, who eventually did the work.

This bit of haggling was, however, but the practice of a keen hand who believed in himself, who had work and to spare at home, whose reputation, in his own belief at least, could be best served by painting done in Tuscany or Umbria, and who if he

was to suffer from the long absence and to incur the laborious, costly and even dangerous journey to Venice, must be well paid for it. The more we consider conditions, the less difficult it grows to free Perugino from the charges of irreligion and avarice. From the readiness to sacrifice to the mercantile spirit, the easy willingness to furnish poor wares to customers who in turn were willing to accept them, we cannot free him. But we have said that the true artist can never be wholly commercial, and Perugino was, in some respects, as true an artist as ever lived; therefore he had to find a mode of expression for the best that was in him. He found it now and again in such pictures as the beautiful triptych of Pavia, but it is probable that he felt that he best atoned for a mercenary spirit and most satisfied his artistic consciousness when he was engaged upon those great works for corporations and cities and popes, his monumental frescoes.

Until within the last twenty-five years the histories of Italian art have, as it were, wreaked themselves upon easel pictures, and yet the true glory of the Italians has been in nearly every case their mural paintings. No artist has suffered more misapprehension by this separation of easel painting from monumental work than has Perugino. He was one of the first to successfully handle the new medium of oil. The depth and transparency, as

well as the novelty of the latter, combined with the painter's own personal and temperamental contribution to make his work popular, and the facility attainable in oil resulted in an enormous multiplication of his pictures. This reduplication has hurt our estimate of Perugino in two ways; first, because among so many works relatively few are of the first order; secondly, because their great number has caused their author to be regarded almost wholly as a painter of small panels or canvases, whereas only a few of his easel pictures deserve comparison with his works in fresco, and even when we examine the most beautiful of his panels, such as those of the triptych of Pavia, we must admit that their qualities are repeated upon a grander scale on the walls of the Sistine Chapel and of the Maddalena de' Pazzi chapter-house. Nevertheless, both as painter of frescoes and of panels, his technical capacity was of a high order. His art was first and last the child of the Umbrian landscape, the landscape with the low horizon line as seen from some hill town with its tremendous sweep of sky. It is the sense of serene, far-reaching space framing his figures that charms us most of all in his work. As a colorist Perugino was a typical Umbrian; his color was warm, transparent, golden; Leonardo's was more delicate, and of the latter's magical chiaroscuro Perugino had no knowledge, indeed he never

even gave a thought to it, but Leonardo's very seeking after that same light and shadow turned his color to blackness, while Perugino's remained transparent and admirably fitted to his purpose of expression. In this last quality of expression he was past-master, but although it made him for a while the most popular painter in Italy, and reached great heights of fervor and pathos, it descended also to affectation and even to mawkishness. As a draughtsman he was elegant but rarely forceful, and sometimes feeble; his compositions when at their best were full of dignity, but more often they were conventional and thin, being lacking in a feeling for the disposition of mass, while, on the other hand, they were always restrained and never overcrowded. Perugino, like Filippino Lippi, did his finest work in the earlier part of his career; but he did not, like Filippino, gradually exchange the sympathetic quality in his painting for the research and striving of a pioneer. On the contrary, he sank to an uniformity of execution which, if often sweet, was often spiritless, and does not always merit our respect. Outraged critics, and among them Vasari, — as we have already seen — have sought for a direct reason for this, and have cried avarice and irreligion. This accusation does not seem wholly reasonable. In a man with the fear of hell before his eyes, avarice might be compatible with the painting of pictures

for religious confraternities for little or no pay, but it could not be so with an irreligious man. Either Perugino may have been avaricious and fearful of the future, or he may have been irreligious and recklessly generous with monks and churches. The former condition of things would clear his reputation for orthodoxy, the latter condition does not seem likely, outside of a comic opera at least, and Perugino's artistic decline in middle life is much more probably the result of external than of internal causes. In his earlier years the mastery of the oil medium, which he achieved sooner than other men, and the intrinsic charm of his work, made him one of the most popular masters not merely in Italy but in Europe. Later, after he had formed his style, there came upon all the schools of Italy a complete change of manner; the gentle and amiable spirit of Raphael still found something to admire in the work of such painters as Perugino and Francia, but Michelangelo and the men of the new school fiercely contemned it. Signorelli retired to the provincial patronage of his native Umbria. Vasari tells us that Botticelli was poor and needy, and therein probably exaggerates his neglect at the hands of newcomers and workers in new ways. It is quite possible that Perugino, finding his pictures despised by the famous artists and eagerly sought for by laymen, gave up striving and became the commer-

cial painter which we know him to have been in later years, and that, without more of avarice or of irreligion than were to be found in his fellows. The fact remains that the earlier works of Perugino are his best, and that multiplication of his pictures has hurt his reputation because the tendency is to judge him by his average, that is to say, when the art lover thinks of Perugino a number of inferior works crowd into his mind; but if he will go through a mental process of elimination and recall the Delivery of the Keys in the Sistine, the Crucifixion in S. Maddalena de' Pazzi, the cycle of the Cambio at Perugia, as the representation of the painter as *frescante*, then will remember the two wonderful profile heads of monks in the Florentine Academy, and consider what Pietro could do as portraitist when he chose to take the time for such work; lastly, if he will review the best panel pictures, the triptych of Pavia, the Vision of St. Bernard, an Enthroned Madonna at Bologna, and not a few others, the student will assuredly give to this master one of the highest places in the secondary group, and will admit that the man who in *quattrocento* composition could in his Delivery of the Keys say the last word before the new order of things came in with the Stanze of the Vatican, and who could in his Pazzi Crucifixion exhibit a new feeling for landscape, was worthy to become the master of Raphael.

## III

To hazard a guess why the violent and sanguinary Perugians so loved the decorous pieties of Perugino is to play with an old puzzle. Many notables have fitted the pieces together more or less well, but the problem still allures us, as it has all restless folk given to questioning and prying when they should be looking and enjoying.

Why does your kitchen maid prefer to read (if she reads anything beside the "Fashionable intelligence" and "Society items" in the newspapers) novels about lords and ladies, instead of realistic fiction? Why does a cultured and sophisticated taste delight in primitive art? Why does our sedentary civilization find pleasure in tales of adventure?

Is it not because Lady Arabella's coquetries and Melozzo's angels, and Chicot's sword-play represent the unusual, the unhackneyed, something remote from the humdrum experiences of daily life?

To Perugia, torn and scarred with incessant conflict, strife was a commonplace and tranquil contemplation the exception. Her piety was as hysterical as were her excesses of martial ardor. Repentance

pushed to a certain extreme becomes a loose self-indulgence hardly less sensual than the sins which it would expiate. Temperance was never an Umbrian virtue. Massacre yesterday and a procession of flagellants to-day; scarce-dried blood puddling the pavement and a gory rain in the air from the scourge-strokes on bare shoulders — that was Perugia's way of establishing spiritual equilibrium. The town of the Griffin was always athirst either for the sacramental wine or the blood of its own brawling citizens. Men turned from the tumults and the excitement of expiatory ceremonies to the serene twilight and restrained harmonies of Perugino's pictures as to a foretaste of heaven. To penitents faint with the exhaustion which follows intense nervous exaltation; to the still panting swashbuckler who knelt with dripping sword before the triptych, how potent must have been the appeal of these rapt Madonnas, these dreaming saints.

How irresistible to the Perugian, suffering from a hypertrophy of passions, unrestrained by inward counsellor or public opinion, to this fervid, tensely strung human creature, was the celestial nirvana of Vanucci's pictures. In the dim twilight of the churches they rose like visions above the mad crowd, who sobbed before them or who in ecstasies of repentance fell on the necks of the foes whom they would presently fall upon with the sword.

To comprehend the Umbrian's point of view we must remember that his was not that morality touched with emotion, the ethical philosophizing Christianity of to-day. Since the preaching of Saint Francis, religion to the Umbrians of the nobler sort, had meant love and aspiration. In their piety there was little preoccupation with moral questions, and a bewildering lack of the Teutonic sense of duty. The wholesome, Latin sanity of Florence was wanting in this ferocious and hallucinated Umbria. A Methodist revival *en permanence* was the ideal of the religious life among these rather murderous mystics. There was no attempt to rationalize belief; to connect it with daily duties; to make it one of the "offices of life;" Umbria ignored the Platonism which hellenizing Florence read into her religion. Chastity, self-sacrifice, loving-kindness, were virtues for the professionally devout to practise; your active fighting layman revered them, contributed handsomely to the exercise of them by others, but they were not for him. "I feel, therefore I am," would have been a Perugian's rendering of the Cartesian dictum. "*In fuoco Amor mi mise,*" he could sing with conviction, but that divine love could influence conduct and become a factor in his daily life, was quite foreign to his conception of spiritual influences.

Emotion pure and simple is not intrinsically holy

or noble; *per se* it possesses no moral value. This gashed and battered Perugia is a pathetic example of the hysterical going-to-pieces of a community governed by feeling. Gentle Suor Brigida and San Bernardino found a city at the mercy of its sensations, and for a little time directed these sensations into noble channels; then came the turn of Braccio di Montone or of Gianpaolo Baglioni to sway their impressionable townsfolk, and the Seven Deadly Sins were loosed again.

Prosaic common-sense was the antiseptic which preserved Florence in spite of her occasional outbreaks of emotion. The democratic spirit enabled Siena, if not to live honorably, at least to die heroically. Perugia was without a balance-wheel. The distraught city was like those souls which Virgil saw "*suspensae ad ventos*," tossed on the whirlwind of desire. Did ever a town bear more plainly upon its face the record of its past misdeeds? It is a natural fortress. Here are twisting streets burrowing under the houses, where a stout chain could check an army; narrow passages between bristling walls, where a single knight, like Astorre Baglioni, might again hold the Oddi at bay. There are abrupt turns in the alleys where an assassin might crouch for a spring, and covered passages where conspirators should wait in darkness for a signal. The whole town cries slaughter and havoc.

The town, yes — but there is the country which sweeps up to the foot of the crag-like bastions, and which is always seen from every coign of vantage in this rocky eyrie. This is the landscape which we see between the adoring or ecstatic saints of Perugino; this is the *patria* of Saint Francis, austere and tender as the *genius loci.* Inexpressibly beautiful as it always is, we love it best in the early spring, when it wears its sober winter tint of russet brown, as though the mantle of Saint Francis still lay upon it. Then the mountains, rising in noble lines, chain behind chain until the farthest peaks melt into the clouds, have hidden their purple under snowy copes. Over the vivid patches of young wheat the olives cast their shadows like faint trails of incense. Sheltered clefts in the hillside are purpled with violets and anemones, and, like the blossoming rod of Saint Joseph, the bare branches of the almond-tree bend under their weight of rosy snow. The sun struggling through vapor, shines, a pale halo over this land of saints, and a light wind rises driving the mist before it, tearing it into long transparent veils fit for Madonna's wear. A storm here with this vast expanse of sky, these solemn mountains and the boundless sweep of the wind is apocalyptic in its grandeur. The huge sheets of mist hurry along the valley from Umbria to Tuscany, or are borne on the hurricane that flies shrieking through

the mountain passes to Ancona and the sea. By and by the vapors rise directly from the plain as if Tiber and Arno were Phlegethon and Cocytus amid the smoke of many miles of burning land until the mist rolls into clouds, and castle after castle, town after town comes into view. When Raphael painted in the Loggie of the Vatican, God the Father separating land from water, darkness from light, he may have remembered these tremendous elemental scene-shiftings that pass before the terraces of Perugia.

The Umbrian towns sit upon thrones, but the throne of Perugia is grandest of them all, rising above a sea of olives and vines, where shining spots in the landscape are historic cities, and the glistening ribbon that bends three times eastward and westward along the southern plain is Tiber, winding down to Rome. Besides possessing this lofty and dreamy beauty of the landscape, the country teems with suggestions and associations. Every mile of it is celebrated in histories of battle or legends of saints. Over these hills Romans and Carthaginians have marched and countermarched and fought. The hill to the right hides "reedy Thrasymene" and Sanguinetto, which once ran red. Far to the south on clear days a white point shows Spoleto, where an arch in the city wall tells us that "From this gate Hannibal was repulsed by the townspeople."

Through the two thousand years which have followed, these same towns have fought perennially, beating off Latins, Romans, Carthaginians, Pope, and Cæsar, and in later times when their own walls were safe, these Umbrians, always on their knees or in the saddle, have waged other people's battles for hire and earned their living by "changing blows." In this fierce and devout Umbria, there were always saints to redeem the sinners and if men were too often wolves, wolves sometimes became holy; not far behind the hills to the northeast is Gubbio, where a wolf wore a halo, and Assisi is close at hand, where lived the Saint who made beasts human and men divine.

Where life has gone on for so many years, time has been found for many things, and the brush has been as active as the sword. It is a painter's land; under the roofs of little Spello, Pinturicchio has left his frescoes; Foligno on the plain once held the Madonna now in the Vatican; the blue and gold of Lippo are mouldering away in the apsis of Spoleto, and yonder in Assisi you may read the gospel of Saint Francis according to Cimabue and Giotto.

There is such a superposition of history and art that memories crowd on the heels of memories; one would hardly dare to say how far the inward or the outward vision can extend, and grander than the historic association or any suggestion of human per-

sonality, is the large elemental sense that is upon it all, of earth and sky and wind and sun.

Surely the evil that men do does not live long after them, and the good is not so oft interred with their bones; the treachery and bloodshed, even the horrors of the last massacre have faded away like the bloodstains on the stone, leaving only memories which vivify the crumbling town, but the peace which Catherine and Francis and Bernardino preached and Perugino painted, has remained.

# CORTONA, — THE DAUGHTERS OF SANTA MARGHERITA

# CORTONA, — THE DAUGHTERS OF SANTA MARGHERITA

PERUGINO was above all a painter for nuns. The suavity and tenderness of his types, the tranquillity of his compositions, a certain decorum and measure which he always observed, commended his pictures to the religious orders. No painter was more popular within convent walls, and no painter has rendered with more charm the ideal of the cloister. Contemplation, absorption in the thought of God, devout meditation on the divine mysteries, detachment from the interests of real life, find plastic exponents in Perugino's figures. His placid, dove-like old men dreaming in the Umbrian sunshine; his reserved and serious adolescents; his ministering angels, so young, so zealous in their service and yet so solemn; his pensive virgins, lost in blissful adoration of the Christ-child, but always serene and noble, — show a chastened restraint, a disciplined fervor which is of the cloister. The wide horizons behind these figures, the clear space of sky between the slender columns from which the silence of the fields, the quiet of evening seem to enter the picture, add to the impression of subdued emotion.

We do not find in Perugino the pious transports of Jacopone da Todi nor the ecstatic devotion of Saint Francis; it is the peace of God rather than the divine love which the painter translated into form. Perugino's people are calm; they enjoy the serene beatitude of renunciation. They have ceased to struggle and suffer; nay, they have never struggled or suffered. They do not think; mental travail has never knit their smooth brows. An indwelling vision holds them entranced while it nowise impairs the bloom of their tranquil beauty. Italian piety was occasionally ascetic, Italian art never was. Indeed there is no such thing as ascetic art, for when the ascetic spirit is in the ascendant, art ceases to exist, and when originally ascetic ideas are translated into artistic *media* they lose their asceticism in the process.

Perugino, like all Italians, had sacrificed to the Pagan gods. In their service he had learned to seek for beauty and serenity. In Italy Divinity has never ceased to be human, and things divine are so firmly rooted in the kindly, brown soil that they always retain something of Mother Earth. It is trite indeed to insist on the advantages which the arts have enjoyed from this attitude towards the spiritual. That the imagination which finds its sphere of action in the plastic arts can never spurn the earth, but must be tethered to the concrete,

is a well-worn platitude because it is eternally true.

These wistful rather weedy youths of Perugino, these pensive Sibyls and yearning Saints, in spite of their seraphic languor, are comely, robust, young creatures, in whom the life currents move gently and evenly. Theirs is an eternal youth of the soul; doubt has never whispered in their ears, or temptation clutched them by the throat; they are unspotted by the world and unfretted by its cares. You may see their like to-day in many an Italian convent perched on the hills of Tuscany or Umbria; the same smooth, sweet faces unfurrowed by thought, the same composed, languid grace, the same expression of modesty and humility. Perugino, could he return to earth, would find his models and his patrons unchanged. Theirs is the large simplicity of the primitive man before the mind — the unquiet, tormenting, questioning mind — had been awakened in him.

It was our good fortune many years ago to visit such a convent and to meet in the flesh the Saints of Perugino. We had stopped at Cortona for the Angelicos and Signorellis, the Greek Muse and the Etruscan lamp, and were guests of mine hostess of the *Stella d' Oro*. She was no ordinary *padrona* but a girl whose vivid beauty made your heart beat, and the hearts of all the youths in the countryside

as well. No *caffè* in the poor little town was as well patronized as ours on a market day when the young farmers of the district came in troops to absorb innumerable *bicchierini* and look into the soft, unfathomable eyes of the libation pourer. We had spent two days in Cortona and were about to start for Perugia, when pretty Matilde wheedled us into staying another half day to visit the convent of Santa Margherita, in which she had been educated. There were marvels within that convent's walls unseen by common tourists who only stayed one day in Cortona and consequently failed to fill the coffers of the *Stella d' Oro*. And the nuns! Angels on earth, who did such stupendous embroideries. And the view! Trasimeno, the mountains behind Montepulciano, it would be a sin to miss it! "But," we objected, "these are cloistered sisters and they won't admit us."

"Oh, otherwise. Indeed they will if I bring you. Besides they have never seen an American, and *monachine* are women — they are curious enough."

"But the men of our party?"

"The *maschi?*" she returned with Latin directness. "We will find a way; come, and you shall see. *Andiamo.*"

Half protesting, half laughing we yielded, and climbed to the highest point of the poverty-stricken town, followed by a crowd of insistent beggars who

commanded rather than besought our charity. On our arrival at the convent our guide rang at the grating, and a nun appeared, wide-eyed with amazement at the family group assembled before her.

"Eh! Pazza (Crazy). What is this?" she asked the intrepid Matilde, who replied in an off-hand manner as though bringing tourists to inspect the convent were an every-day occurrence.

"Dear Sister here are some Americans, Protestants; a whole family, understand; a papa, a mamma, two little girls, and two *bambini*, whom I have brought to see you! Eh! why not? *They* have never seen a convent, *you* have never seen an American family, and Protestants too. It will give pleasure to you both. Isn't it just?"

We never knew what the sister portress replied to this incontrovertible argument, for Matilde disappeared within the doorway after bidding us wait and fear nothing. We, confiding in her powers of dialectic and the desire of the good nuns to see a whole brood of heretics, young ones included, stood patiently without. There was much chattering on the other side of the wall; our advent had fluttered the dovecote; probably the papa was the stumbling-block. He was carefully inspected through the grating, and, as he possessed a snowy beard and white hair, the nuns decided that he might enter, "*perchè rassomiglia tanto a Dio Padre*,"

they explained to us later. Thanks to his resemblance to the "*père éternel de l'école italienne*," the grating swung open before us, and we filed in past the little turnstile through the long, bare corridor into the refectory. Here we found the whole chapter assembled; girl-nuns with downy, round cheeks and big innocent eyes; older nuns with sweet patient faces, and elderly nuns, cheerful and sprightly, tenderly touched by Time, who deals so gently with those who renounce all attempts to outwit him. There was the Mother Superior, a tiny old lady who had spent forty years in the convent, a kind of fairy godmother shrivelled like a delicate autumn leaf, her brown face lighted by mouse-like eyes. There was Sister Elizabeth, "*la dotta*," the learned one, slender, graceful, with a wistful expression and delicate, worn features. Evidently she was paying the penalty of having timidly pecked at the fruit of the forbidden tree. But the rest seemed unvexed by knowledge either of the world or of books, and their innocent excitement over our arrival was uncomplicated by intellectual curiosity. They were strangely like the saints of Umbrian pictures as they stood in the clear light of the spring morning which entered unobstructed through the great windows. And what complexions! What roses of Sharon, and what lilies of the valley! Were pure water and mountain air the cause of this lovely

coloring? Was it the result of a regular and temperate life? Or was it the reward of self-control and holy thoughts and placid resignation? Who knows?

After Matilde had presented us with that grace of manner which is the Italian's birthright, with Sister Elizabeth for *cicerone* we began a stately progress through the convent. In the refectory we had observed that the dishes on the long table dated from the middle of the last century. This phenomenon was accounted for when we learned that each sister washed her own, and was "disciplined" when she broke anything. Penances had evidently been rarely imposed for that particular misdemeanor.

Escorted by the whole company we entered the class-room, for the nuns now have charge of the communal school, a huge *sala* planned and built in the sumptuous Italian manner before the world was overcrowded and space had become a serious consideration. Here the lively little Superior, who, as soon as she found that the foreigners spoke Italian, became so animated as to be well-nigh unintelligible, requested the papa (during our entire visit he was always addressed as *il Signor Babbo*) to indicate on the school-room globe the exact spot from whence we came. Nuova York was therefore pointed out and the watery waste which we had

traversed with "undaunted courage" made a deep impression on our auditors. "So much water! *Madonna!* In what peril you were!" chirped the little Mother, clasping her minute hands. "Elizabeth, do you understand, my daughter?"

The carnations in Elizabeth's cheeks flamed into damask roses.

"Yes, Mother, the Atlantic ocean is three thousand miles across," she said in a low voice.

The Superior turned to us radiant with triumph. "She knew it, of course she knew it, she knows everything. Is n't it true?"

An enthusiastic assent from the other sisters confirmed this declaration of "*la dotta's*" omniscience. Either Sister Elizabeth's humility shrank from this tribute or else she felt that she must justify it by further erudition. "Every Italian should know about America because an Italian discovered it and an Italian named it," she said, addressing us apologetically. We assured her, to the joyous surprise of the sisters, that we were conversant with these facts, and that the Americans had not forgotten them. Just then a very young nun with a grave, angelic face who should have been inside a picture-frame gathering flowers for a Baby Christ edged up to us and queried timidly: "But are you true Americans? We thought they were red, or black, like this one."

She pointed to a negro's head done in wool work by some youthful Cortonese. Twenty years ago, in an Italy filled with beautiful motives for textile decoration, this design was very popular. The mortified "*dotta*" hurried to the rescue.

"We Italians are immensely ignorant," she explained, gently patting the girl nun's shoulder, "and many of us do not know that you English colonists are white, blond even like the *bambino* there, do we? Sister Filomena is so busy with her beautiful embroidery that she has no time for history, *poverina*. But you will see her work presently." The wise sister then busied herself in showing us the text-books supplied by the government for use of the scholars, but Filomena was quite unabashed. "Never did geography please me," she confessed, "nor history either, but I have a passion for calligraphy."

"Nor does it please me," added the Superior. "When I travel I learn geography, and how far it is from one town to another, and how much the ticket costs *seconda classe*, but as for far-off places which I shall never see — for them I have no memory."

Evidently to the good Mother, America was included in that *terra incognita* which in old maps is designated as "Here reigns Cimmerian darkness," or "Here are men who walk with their heads under

their arms." Corporate pride again impelled the "*dotta*" to explain.

"Our Mother is a painter. She has made many copies in the Florentine galleries and several stupendous designs — properly the works of a master. She does not occupy herself with geography, for artists do not care for physics."

"Our Mother" protested. "Those are *roba vecchia*," done when she was young and in the world. Otherwise are pictures painted nowadays, with great brush-strokes, — and she waved an absurdly small hand, a real *manina di monaca*, in the air. She had aspirations once like another but — Well! if we would see them we must needs be indulgent to a *povera vecchia;* and with a deprecatory shrug she led the way with great alacrity to the chapel.

The *roba vecchia* proved to be careful copies in oil and crayon of well-known works in the Uffizi, patiently, sincerely, and rather tamely executed. "There were others in the work-rooms and in the nuns' cells," she admitted. So we went from one high-studded, bare, immaculate chamber to another, the sweet mountain air pouring through the open windows and ruffling the plumes of our attendant doves. Bitterly cold this great pile of stone must be in winter, but the nuns never light a fire except in the cavernous kitchen fireplace.

We saw more copies and many embroideries and laces, for each sister, like Desdemona, seemed to be "delicate with her needle," and Italian trousseaux and layettes are made by their adroit and dainty fingers. The altruistic ostentation of the nuns was by far the prettiest thing that they showed us. "She did that!" "The Sisters Chiara and Francesca made those!" "See this lace of Sister Benedetta's. *Vedi quant' è sottile!*" Each needlewoman was praised in turn by her fellow-workers, and blushingly disclaimed their eulogies with a scarcely audible "It 's a poor little thing! *Non c' è niente davvero!*"

They presently discovered that the Signora Mamma had a headache, and then what a wealth of solicitude was lavished upon her! How soon half a hundred angelic faces looked celestial pity, and how sweetly fifty gentle voices cooed commiseration! What could they do for the *emicrania?* Salts? There were none in the convent! Succory water? That would take hours to make. What could be done? Matilde, who had been quite subdued until now, had an idea: "English people drank tea when they had headaches; it was an excellent *tisane.*" Alas! the nuns had never seen or tasted it; it was evidently not considered an orthodox beverage and had a decided tang of heresy about it, to judge from their expression when it was mentioned. Besides, there was no tea in Cortona; three years before, an

English tourist had left a little with the apothecary, but it had grown mouldy and had been "*buttato via.*"

Tea being quite out of reach, the Mother, who was a woman of action, determined to try the curative properties of a native remedy. Sister Chiara was therefore presented with a huge key from a Bluebeard-like bunch which hung at the Mother's waist, and told to run to the pharmacy for the little flask of alkermes from the Certosa. Sister Chiara evidently asked nothing better than to stretch her long limbs by a run through the halls. She went and returned in a trice, speeding like a greyhound, only pausing at the door to settle her coif and fold her long sleeves over her hands before she re-entered, a model of demure maidenliness, with the precious vial.

It was evidently a rite, this opening of the alkermes. No one but the Superior would have ventured to officiate at this ceremony. "*Ci vuol pazienza,*" she observed as she slowly poured drop after drop of liquid ruby into a tiny gilded glass. She needed a steady hand as well as patience, for in spite of her care the cordial overflowed the *bicchierino.* What would you? one grows old and tremulous. The *dotta,* by a pious fraud, furtively wiped up the spilt treasure with her spotless sleeve, as she handed the spicy alkermes to the Signora

Mamma. Who could be so hard of heart as to remain uncured by the precious potion? Another pious fraud was promptly perpetrated and the sufferer declared that she was greatly relieved. The younger sisters looked on with deep interest and an expression which said plainly enough: "You are not to be pitied after all; drinking a whole glass" (it was quite as large as a thimble) "of the good Mother's cordial" and one baby-faced *sorellina*, whose *péché mignon* was evidently greediness, passed a rose-leaf tongue over her lips very much as a puppy does when he watches one at dinner.

It was during our visits to their cells that the nuns betrayed a touch of human weakness. In each small, stony chamber, in striking contrast to the austerity of the other appointments, was a blessed *bambino* most elaborately attired. No middle-class American infant dressed for "a day of pleasure" on an excursion steamer or a Sunday school picnic was ever more elaborately tucked and frilled and belaced than were these holy dolls. Dexterous and pious needles had been consecrated to their service, and individual taste had been allowed unusual latitude in their embellishment. There was evidently much rivalry of a sublimated, seraphic sort between the sisters about these *bambini*, and we were obliged to carefully measure our encomiums of them. A *Gesulino* in lace pantalettes having stimulated our

admiration, a cherubic nun fairly dragged us in to her cell to see a *bambino* in pink kid slippers which came from Paris. A very young *bambino*, hardly out of the mewling stage, tightly bound in swaddling-clothes, aroused our curiosity, and our unguarded expressions of it enkindled such passions in gentle breasts that we were obliged to insincerely eulogize the lace bibs of several very *bourgeois* and conventional *Gesulini*. This naïve exhibition of innocent vanities lasted nearly an hour. What a wise church it was which provided this outlet for womanly coquetries! There *were* members of our family who took a deep and critical interest in doll-dressing, having studied the subject exhaustively in several European capitals, and according to these connoisseurs, the sisters' efforts had been crowned with a fair measure of success.

At the door of a cell two sisters stopped one of our party, a girl of fifteen, and with an alluring air of mystery drew her into an empty class-room, where the elder of the two seized the stranger's hands and panted tremulously: "Will you do something for me? It is my brother; I must write to him. Three years ago he went to America and we have never heard from him. My mother tells me each time that she is permitted to visit me that she has no letter. He may have received a *coltellata* (a knife-stroke) in that country, he may

have the fever — he may be dead. We know nothing, not even how to send a letter rightly."

"Yes, yes, I understand," answered the American; "I am at your service. Now, *senza complimenti*, what can I do for you?"

"How much are you *gentile!*" gasped the poor little sister. "*Ecco!* I will write him a letter which you will post for me, if the address is well written, and when you go back to your country you will perhaps see him. He is in Caracas. Is that far from Nuova York?" There was no time to estimate the distance, even if the little American had been capable of the computation, so she answered vaguely that Caracas was "*lontano assai*," but that the letter should be sent.

"It is perhaps a sin against holy obedience," reluctantly suggested the nun.

"*Sicuro*, of course it is for you, but not for me. *You* only give me the letter, *I* post it," cheerfully rejoined the Yankee casuist. (There are no subtler players at Loyola's own game than the New Englanders when they choose.)

"But," faltered the nun, with a lovely blush that was sadly wasted in a cloister, "there should be a stamp — I have no money — not a *soldo*, and we poor daughters of Saint Francis —"

"*I* have hundreds of stamps," interrupted the foreign conspirator. "Now mind: you send the let-

ter to Matilde at the Stella d' Oro before to-morrow morning, and I 'll post it myself. *Capisce.*"

The little sister employed all the resources of a language framed for courtesy to thank the stranger for this trifling service, and ended characteristically enough with: "And I shall pray for you to the American saint, your compatriot, Santa Rosa of Lima." Then they scurried back to the doll show, hoping to avoid detection. Did they? Who knows? The letter did not come to the inn, which was a pity, for it would sometimes be reassuring to count on the intercession of Santa Rosa.

The plotters found Sister Elizabeth telling the story of Saint Margaret of Cortona. Now this particular saint had been very popular with us in our juvenile art studies in Italy. Our interest was, however, of the inferior kind now contemned as "literary," and was roused by the saint's attribute, a small dog. A relation of her life and adventures during which the presence of the dog would be accounted for had been eagerly demanded. The *dotta's* version of the story of this local Magdalen was probably arranged for the use of young persons, so we cannot vouch for its accuracy.

Santa Margherita was a beautiful girl, properly a beauty; the daughter of a rich man who lived in Alviano (here Alviano was pointed out from the hall window and inspected with a new interest).

Her mother died when she was a *bambinella,* and her father soon brought home a stepmother who treated the little one with the usual cruelty. (The barbarity of the stepmother was accepted as a matter of course by the younger auditors. In the world of fairy tale a kind stepmother is as rare as an ugly princess.) Well, the poor Margherita was starved, and overworked, and beaten every day, and grew up to be the prettiest girl in the country. Her stepmother's hatred increased daily and finally the *poverina* could endure no more, and ran away to lead an evil life.

(The dog having as yet failed to appear, some of the audience began to show their disappointment. They were perceptibly cheered, however, by the announcement of Margherita's wickedness, depravity being generally diverting, while the little sisters whose conceptions of sin were confined to tearing a veil, or forgetting a prayer, and who had heard the story before, looked down on Thrasymene or thought on Heaven, if one could judge from their countenances). One night a *Signorone* who desperately loved her was stabbed just after he had left Margherita's house. The next day his little dog (a sigh of satisfaction from the more critical auditors) came to her whining and pulling her dress. Wondering why his master did not return with him, she finally followed the dog to the spot where her lover lay dead.

The rest of the story was dramatically an anti-climax, and was designed "rather for edification than for delectation," to borrow a phrase of Saint Francis de Sales. The youngest of Sister Elizabeth's hearers, after we had been told of Margherita's sudden conversion, her severe penance, and her final admission into the Franciscan order, timidly inquired what became of the dog, and *la dotta* forfeited her title to universal knowledge by confessing that she did not know. Let us hope that the *cagnolino* took orders with his saint and followed her to the convent as did Chanteloup, the dog of Madame de Choiseul, when his mistress renounced the world.

It is impossible to render the dramatic quality which *la dotta's* vivid presentation gave to this simple story. Her eloquent hands, her vocal inflections, the remarkable plasticity of her facial muscles were employed to visualize for us the various characters of the tale. She was the cruel step-mother, and the injured saint, and the murdered lover, and the little dog, by turns. She forgot all about Sister Elizabeth until after the Christ of the convent crucifix had bowed its head in answer to the prayers of the saint and the story was finished. Then, in a twinkling, the mime vanished, and the nun reappeared. As she stood against the wide horizon with folded hands and shining eyes, with the warmth of enthusiasm on her face, she was more than ever

like one of our Perugino's fervid yet demure virgins. Behind her lay Thrasymene, like a down-tossed shield of silver, the distant mountains, aerial with mist, faintly pencilled against the light-filled sky, and in the foreground rose the slender poplars and olives showing the delicate framework of their branches under their sparse foliage, — the landscape familiar to all lovers of the Umbrian painter.

Then we said good-bye while a chorus of sweet voices recommended us, quite superfluously, not to forget Santa Margherita, and we went into the town again, softly stirred by the indefinable emotion which one feels in the presence of innocence and holiness.

The next day we journeyed to Perugia with a handsome, kindly deputy who had been with Garibaldi in all his campaigns. To him we recounted our impressions of the nuns of Santa Margherita. He received our confidences dryly enough. Nuns, oh, yes, he knew them well, with their lowered eyelids and their soft voices! They were Jesuits, all of them.

We objected that ours were not Jesuits, but Franciscans.

"Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, they were the same cattle!" He knew, and he had paid for knowing it; "they were all hypocrites!"

Poor, brave, clever deputy! We vaguely felt that he was missing something.

# SPOLETO

# SPOLETO

We went to Spoleto for Fra Lippo's sake, but we lingered there a while, only too short a while, for its own. The friar's fresco is in the cathedral: you cannot love it as you do his works at Prato or his Coronation in the Academy of Florence; you cannot study it in detail, — it is too battered, but you feel that here in his last work he is, as decorator, more impressive than he has ever been elsewhere. This also is a Coronation of the Virgin, filling with its dusky richness the half-dome of the duomo's apse, a great mouldering, decaying, splendid decoration. Fra Lippo always loved color better than did most of his Tuscan contemporaries, and the Umbrian country has laid its Midas-touch upon the Tuscan traveller. Time, too, and winter damp — for they have a little winter up here on the hills, even in this southern country — have helped to paint the picture. They have laid a delicate bloom upon the ultramarine, brightened the gold here and dulled it there, run the blue into green, the green into blue, flaked away the surfaces till the brocades have other patterns, other tints, than those the artist gave them, have confused the lines but enriched the colors, until

few frescoes can approach its mingling of attractiveness and dignity.

"The bowery, flowery angel brood" has grown into great solemn figures; if the sweet-faced Lucrezia of Florence be here we cannot see her for the distance and the confusion of forms. Perhaps some of the naturalism of the early Lippo, the Lippo who lodged with "a certain Master Cosimo of the Medici i' the house that caps the corner," is hidden in that same confusion, or by the marring of time, or is swallowed up in the great cracks that seam the surface. What we do see is the ordered company of the saints and angels with the rainbow and the planets beneath their feet, all kneeling or standing around the great *mandorla* within whose rays the Eternal Father crowns Our Lady. It is no longer the familiar and joyous Lippo of the Prato choir, but an artist who cares for his decoration rather than for his story, a Lippo grown grave and architectonic. There are other of his works in the choir, but the abiding impression comes from the great semi-dome.

Spoleto has not many art treasures, as the Spoletans said to the magnificent Lorenzo when he wished to take the body of his painter to Florence; they added that they should like to keep his bones with them as an object of local interest. Perhaps they were right, for Lorenzo gave those bones a

tomb which the sacristan still shows with pride, and if the monks thought "*caret monasterium miraculo*," they got a very fair one in that "Coronation."

One hardly likes to remain under the vaulting of Spoletan churches because what is outside is so very beautiful; not the town, wonderfully picturesque as it is, but the setting of the town: the high mountains with their rocks and grass slopes; their dense woods; their ilexes and pines; the convent of Monte Luco on its platform, and the massive, uplifted citadel, built by Theodoric, held long by Lombard dukes that they and their brothers of Benevent might together cow the southern country in the days of rough blows and *jus Longobardorum*, and fortified and restored again by Rossellino that papal nepotism might keep it in the days of poison and purchased battle. Below the citadel, the gigantic aqueduct of Theodelapius spans between the town and the Monte Luco, a chasm two hundred and seventy feet deep: here as the torrent dashed far below, and the wheels of a mill-tower clattered above, the landscape combined Alpine grandeur with the loveliness of the south. There was a sense of swimming in light; one half closed the eyes, to temper the radiance reflected back from the dazzling greenery above, barred by the purple trunks of the olives, and strove to note and memorize the bewilderingly shifting succession of impressions

Just after we had left the edge of a flower-bordered precipice, and as we lingered before a church front whose sculptured bible-heroes were crusaders in full harness, we fished up a pearl from the ideas of a courteous (all are courteous here) and handsome woman who stood knitting by the road side.

Alexander VI. gave Spoleto as a duchy to his daughter Lucrezia: now Italians usually delight in the picturesqueness of their history and the salient points of what little they have heard, and embroider upon the same. We expected from our *Spoletana* something of the same interest in her Renaissance duchess that a Sienese would accord to Pia de' Tolomei, or a Ravennese to Francesca de' Polentani; but we had not counted on the fact that in Italy an hundred thousand know their Dante for one who has heard of Alexander VI. "Can you tell us," we asked in good faith, while we looked down upon Spoleto, "which palace in the town was that of Lucrezia Borgia?" The woman raised her handsome face, still young, but with its forehead, under the pent-house of black hair, lined from the constant half closing of the eyes against the tyrannous sun. "Lucrezia Borgia?" she said; then repeating it more slowly asked, "Have I the name aright?" We assented, and she continued in rather a regretful tone, "I do not think there is *any one* of that name living in

Spoleto." We smiled and thanked her, but Umbrian courtesy was not easily baffled. She looked at the driver of the carriage and he at her, and seeming to have found her solution, she said brightly, "But hear now, I will tell you what to do; you ask at the hotels; very likely she is in one of them." "She was Duchess of Spoleto nearly four hundred years ago," said we. Driver and woman threw back their heads in delighted laughter. "No wonder we do not know her," they cried, and they must have repeated their story that evening often enough to establish Lucrezia firmly in the minds of a whole quarter.

If Madonna Lucrezia had been at our hostelry she would have found it not unfamiliar in character, for it was one of those hotel-palaces conventionally expected in Italy, and utterly unconventional in every other way. *Albergo*, *locanda*, palace, castle, cavern; you might call it anything you pleased, rather than a hotel of our nomenclature. It was a rambling, heaven-knows-how-far kind of place, suggestive of brigands, suggestive of starvation by hopeless loss of way, and imprisonment for life in some unvisited part of the house, but suggestive of little comfort in its bare walls, brick floors, and echoing, arched landings. The beds herded together in a lonely way in the middle of our huge room; an enormous *salotto* with a brick floor opened from it, while underneath the windows, there was a kind

of hanging garden with a thick battlemented wall. Below stairs things seemed more civilized, and were decidedly interesting, for one room was filled with *cassoni*, great coffers richly carved and in some cases gilded. These were piled one on top of another, in a way that suggested unlimited quantity and the possibility of purchase; but no, they had all been contracted for by dealers and were going to Paris! Faience plates hung thickly upon the wall, faience, too, glittered in the dining room, and a handsome majolica cylinder held artificial flowers amid a carnival of natural ones. The wealth of ware was impressive, for Spoleto, in its primitiveness, and above all in its proximity to the centres of a Renaissance Art industry which flourished greatly in Umbria and the Marches, suggested no unfaith as to the antiquity of its ceramics, but the landlord told us that all this pottery was modern, of Gubbio truly, and having full right to the famous stamp of the town, but of the Gubbio of to-day.

Fragments of old Roman, and very early mediæval sculptural ornament set in more recent masonry, spangled the walls of Spoletan churches almost as liberally as the plates did our dining-room; truly those Spoletani who wished to keep Fra Lippo as a relic appear to have been by nature rather pickers-up and preservers of curiosities than creators of original art, and in this respect the town

seems remote from her Umbrian sisters, Assisi, Perugia, and Foligno. The coronal circlet of the Lombard dukes settled so firmly upon her brow that expansion was unlikely in the direction of thinking for herself. She was a much governed city, and her rôle was to fight for her masters, and fight she did most gallantly for her great mistress Rome, only twenty-five years after she became a Roman colony.

In the town wall, with a tower shooting up beside it, is still the gate called Porta d' Annibale, Porta della Fuga, gate of Hannibal, or of the Flight; the inscription on it proclaims that here the Carthaginians in 217 B.C. were sharply repulsed by the citizens. What does it matter if it were not at exactly that point of the circumvallation? Wall and gate were there before the battle, and it was a brave sally against one who was marching straight from a crushing victory at Thrasymene. Indeed, in a sense, these hill towns are older than Rome; an older blood than even the Latin may run in the veins of the shepherds who live high up on the mountains which frame them in. There, inaccessible to the ordinary occurrences of life in the valley, too few and too poor to have been worth any trouble to the far-reaching arm of Rome, the herdsmen looking down may have seen far below them the lighted wisps upon the horns of Fabius's cattle, the carnage

of Thrasymene, the battles of the barbarians, and of the Renaissance, without ever being drawn into the whirlpool; going on marrying and burying and perpetuating, in the mountains of a changing Italy, the blood of Oscan, Sabellian, and Samnite, and living much as they do nowadays, before those Volumnii who sit in effigy in their tomb by the Tiber side came into existence. As for the hill-cities, at first independent, then "erected into Roman colonies," with their backs set against the mountains, behind their girdle of towers and under their carapaces of tiles, like Roman soldiers beneath their tortoise of shields, each one beat off the barbarians again and again, was left high and dry by the flood which broke about its base, and keeping the old Latin stock within its walls had a good right to boast, each one of them, *Civitas Romana sum.*

Perhaps of all the beauty of the most lovely of lands, the beauty of Umbria is, if not the greatest, the most moving. Not the riotous color of Naples with its bay; not even the opalescence of the Venetian lagoons can surpass the high serenity of the mountain forms that lift into a clearer atmosphere a landscape thickly set with Umbrian and Tuscan hill towns; the Etruscan city of Perugia, holy Assisi upon its mountain, Trevi piled volcano-like in sunlit pyramid with bright volume of cloud for a smoke wreath behind its pinnacle, and Orvieto rising sheer

and circling its precipices like a coronet with Maitani's church for a central jewel. It is more beautiful than anything that one can say or even carry away in the mind. A glory is upon the whole land, upon its laden vines and rocks and olive orchards; its gentle, long-horned white oxen; its handsome, kindly people telling with proprietary pride of their towns, "*molto antiche;*" of their masters; "our Perugino" here, "our Pinturicchio" there, "our Luca," "our Gentile"; "*vini nostrani,*" these with a rich tang of the soil. Night after night we saw from our windows, in rank behind rank, pure lines of mountain forms, not terrible or serrated like the Alps, but calm and billowing; saw the vast tract of country where Tuscany and Umbria run together, and where two streamlets rising side by side, narrow as brooks, wide in fame as the world, hurry north and south towards Florence and Rome. History lay strata deep before us. Flaminius climbed here; Hannibal hid there in the mist; *condottieri* marched over mountains tufted by Perugino's trees; Garibaldians trooped to the reconquest of Etruria over hills filled with the arms and bones of Lucumos that rusted and mouldered before ever Rome was republican. In a rich and changing country impressions crowded upon the mind and brain till they could hold no more: now we looked upon the undecipherable records of an almost forgotten peo-

ple; again upon Perugia's blood-stained, wine-washed church, or we followed in the footsteps of Saint Francis, or descended into Etruscan tombs, or traced the wanderings of the painters.

One wondered at the close of each day that the hours could again have yielded in new form such fresh harvest of delight. At sunset, the joyous clamor of the bells burst forth. Pealing and humming, they furrowed the air with mighty reverberations to which the nerves vibrated in unison. Perugia called to Assisi, Assisi to Spoleto ringing the Angelus, saluting Mary, Mother of the God who died to save so beautiful a world.

# ASSISI

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## I

It is only recently that modern methods of study and research have been applied to the investigation of the records of the life of Saint Francis, and that the "Fioretti" have found a commentator who is at once learned, intuitive, and free from the limitations of either intolerance or superstition. M. Paul Sabatier has invested the already winning figure of the Assisan saint with a new charm. He has revealed to us the man Francis struggling for freedom of thought and speech to realize in the outer life the indwelling ideal, and striving for the liberation of love and faith from the tyranny of theology.

Under the childlike sweetness and grace of the devotee and the poet M. Sabatier has divined the innovator and the reformer opposing a persistent resistance to the formalizing tendencies of the church, and zealously guarding the integrity of his conception of the religious life from incessant attack. The Saint of M. Sabatier loses none of the appealing tenderness of the "Brother" of the "Fioretti," but he gains in vitality and above all in moral

force. This earnest and purposeful Francis who wills and plans, is not only a lover, a singer, and a seer, but the strenuous founder of the Franciscan revival, and the discoverer of a new world of feeling. How many saints have had to wait until our own eclectic and catholic age for a worthy biographer! As the blessed wafer at Bolsena bled in the hands of the unbelieving priest, so the lives of holy men and women when handled by the doubter show human blood under the crust of monkish tradition. Beneath the touch of the reverent sceptic is their humanity manifested. The saints of "Golden Legends" and "*Acta Sanctorum*" lack vitality, they are not human; their biographers did not understand them and consequently did not see wherein their real greatness lay. The monks who wrote of them overlooked their true titles to love and veneration to dwell on the self-inflicted tortures and the hallucinations which are the accidents, not the essentials, of saintliness.

They who in force of volition, in intensity of emotion, transcend the ordinary capacity of man are represented as less than man. The violent who take the kingdom of heaven by storm; they of the unswerving purpose and the overmastering desire; they who surpass their fellows as much by the ardor of their affections as by the nobility of their ideals, are too often described as passionless,

characterless abstractions, or as puppets moved by the hand of an ecclesiastical superior.

Saint Francis has been more fortunate. He has been twice portrayed with rare insight by two loving disciples; by Brother Leo in the thirteenth, and by Brother Paul in the nineteenth century. The quality of M. Sabatier's "*Saint François d'Assise*," eludes definition. One cannot frequent the society of the blessed with impunity. Prolonged and constant study of a powerful and alluring personality tends to unconscious assimilation of the salient traits of that personality. It is perilous to live in close communion with saintliness unless we would become holy. M. Sabatier has dwelt with the rose. Spiritual habitation with the memory of Saint Francis has left its impress upon every chapter of his biography. "Love is a great seer," said Plato. While remaining mentally and morally French and Protestant, M. Sabatier's heart has turned Franciscan. His work affords a notable instance of the illumination which sympathy and intuition bring to modern methods of research.

It is to this friend and interpreter of Saint Francis that we owe a more assured knowledge of the springs of that European movement which has been wisely termed the Franciscan revival. For "*Il Poverello*," "the little poor man," was one of the makers of Italy. To him not only religion, but art

and literature are deeply indebted, and in the short list of the precursors of the Renaissance his name leads all the rest.

In order to estimate at its true value the effects of the Franciscan revival, we must consider what the religion, thought, art, and poetry of the Italy of the twelfth century could offer to a soul "tormented by desire of things divine."

At the end of the twelfth century the church had ceased to minister to the spiritual needs of her people. The learned were occupied in asking and answering theological conundrums; in arguing about symbols, and in endless discussion, comparison, and classification of unrealities. It was a strange, phantasmal world, this of the mediæval theologian; a world in which facts and actuality had no place and in which keen and vigorous minds were employed in a perpetual threshing of mere words with apparently no cognizance of what words represent. This endless wrangling over abstractions rings hollow to a modern ear. Did generations of men really devote time and thought to piecing together doctrinal Chinese puzzles? Had the natural human rationalism, the sound, prosaic good sense of Paganism entirely disappeared from the sphere of thought? Had reverence for words, the words of former theologians, replaced the pursuit of ideas?

It would seem so to the modern reader who wan-

ders bewildered through these labyrinths of dialectic. Nature and man had no existence for the mediæval "chop logic." He looked neither up to the stars above his head nor down at the flowers at his feet. He ignored his own soul as utterly as he overlooked his neighbor's heart. There was then no lack of intellectual effort or of the spirit of inquiry, but they were devoted to the examination and demonstration of ineptitudes. All wisdom was supposed to be contained in the Scriptures and in the Patristic writings; study was therefore limited to them, and the mind, exercised only between certain lines of demarcation, was "servant of all work to a foregone conclusion."

Mental effort was wasted in wresting every passage in these works from its obvious and literal meaning and investing it with some far-fetched and fantastic purport. The dialecticians had lost sight of the fact that terms have no value in themselves, and only become legal tender in intellectual affairs when they represent things. The machinery of thought could not be applied to the realities of life by minds numbed by the weight of authority. The technique of reasoning had been perfected, but for lack of knowledge it worked *in vacuo* and forceful intellects lost themselves in the ordered mazes of metaphysics. Such was the result of the despotism of dogma over thought. It

would be a risible, were it not a melancholy spectacle, to see the scholar driven from the Elysian fields of lofty speculation into this treadmill of dreary dialectic, of sterile straw-splitting.

The supremacy of theology extended into the sphere of morals. Ecclesiastical authority had established a new standard of righteous living. The monastic virtue of obedience to a spiritual superior was ranked far above the active charity of the primitive Christian. The belief in the brotherhood of man and the obligations it imposes which Christianity had inherited from the Stoic was ignored. The benevolent impulses which the early church had stimulated and directed were repressed. There was a keen sense of duty, but it was of the duty of every man to save his own soul. Moral obligation severed from any regard for the well-being and happiness of others was perforce devoid of human significance. Naturally enough, the technique instead of the end of virtuous acts and of pure living became all-important. "It is of more consequence for us to act rightly than to do good," wrote Abélard.

An ideal of human conduct which ignored human relations impelled those who aspired to the "higher life" to renounce family affections and cast aside ease and pleasure; not to secure the spiritual liberty which is obtained by the sacrifice of domestic

ties and humdrum cares, not to escape the tyranny of the senses which obscures the inward vision, but because for some mysterious reason, continence, fasting, and solitary confinement were supposed to be agreeable to the Divinity. They who practised these mortifications by pleasing the Creator put him under promise to pay for gratification received.

Even the temporal works of mercy were empty of altruism. The pious who relieved the wants of the unfortunate were not moved by pity for suffering, but were "laying up treasure in heaven," and investing their capital in celestial securities. Imagine the awful loneliness of this inner life! — each human creature's potentialities for good and usefulness absorbed in the salvation of his own soul. This conception of holy living reminds one of Beckford's hall of Eblis, a place of eternal torment, where each lost spirit, his hand pressed upon his flaming heart, wandered restlessly about in spiritual isolation, with no thought of his fellow-sufferers.

If a tender and ardent nature turned from the dreary formalism of the church, the thought-deadening lore of the scholars, to art, he found that the same desiccating influence which had converted religion and learning into a banquet of husks, had parched the life out of painting. Madonna was a lifeless, bedizened idol, a mere Christ-bearer with no love for her burden; the divine Child was a star-

ing puppet, with nothing of the pathos or grace of childhood, and the Saints were gorgeously robed lay figures. Humanity was banished from this glistening, unreal world of art. The Byzantine model (for the Greeks were the purveyors of Italian painting in the twelfth century) for the Holy Family was the imperial family. The Blessed Virgin was represented as an Oriental empress; the Holy men and women as patricians; the Saviour as an emperor tricked out with the imperial finery, or as a livid, hideous corpse, and Paradise was the gilded palace of Constantinople. As for ordinary human beings, landscape, trees, flowers, animals, sky, or sea, — the realities of life, — such vulgarities were never essayed by these aristocratic artists, who portrayed only the most exalted personages of the imperial and celestial courts. Pictures were manufactured from time-honored recipes, like the cloyingly delicious rose-confections, or the minutely gorgeous embroideries of Eastern convents, and held the same relation to the needs of daily life.

There remained one city of refuge for the free spirit. Poetry had enfranchised itself from the numbing tyranny of formalism. The poets, trouvères, troubadours, minnesingers, were the only freemen of the early middle-ages. They alone among these spiritual serfs dared to love and to sing, nay, at times even to think, and consequently to doubt.

In an age which warred against family ties and natural affections, which considered marriage a half sin, a reluctant concession to the frailty of human nature, they filled Europe with one great hymn to love, and to the love most opposed to the monastic ideal, the love of man and woman.

*Ex forte dulcedo :* out of the skeleton of the old Latin speech the new languages were growing, and the first blossom which they bore was the love-song, or rather the love-hymn. The poets, as though moved by one impulse, united to divinize the passion which the churchmen had degraded, and almost simultaneously in Provence, France, and Germany, love became a religion. Spontaneous and genuine as was the sentiment, in the hands of form-loving peoples it soon assumed the formulæ and ceremonial of worship. As amorphous emotion received a definite impress, the new cultus speedily acquired its sacred language, its symbols, its observances, its ritual, and its creed. Love's devotees fasted, prayed suffered in penances, and watched in weary vigils. Vows, litanies, acts of adoration, were offered to the new divinity, as well as humble supplications, and devout thanksgivings. The sacrifices of his votaries were recompensed with blissful visions, and ecstatic swoons, and miracles were worked on the graves of his pilgrims and martyrs.

It was no mere lip service that was given to the

god. It was the oblation of the heart, the soul, and the flesh, a more complete sacrifice of the whole man than the furious and tyrannical Amor of antiquity had received. The love of the knight for his lady, of the minstrel for the *châtelaine*, was no brief fever like the love of the Latin poets, no fierce, devouring blaze like the tragic passions of the Greek drama. Nor was it a cosy hearthfire like the tranquil affection of Plutarch for his wife, or the patronizing tenderness of the kind, rather meddling husband in the "Œconomicus." Mediæval love was a reverently nurtured altar-flame, and the lover was a priest whose service was accounted holy.

The forces which had long been silently at work, modifying, transforming the conditions of human development, had finally produced a new type of human creature and a new manner of feeling. It is difficult to define the factors which had caused this revolution in the province of emotion. The Teutonic respect for women can hardly be counted among them as it was in Provence, and France, that these changes first manifested themselves and became articulate. The worship of the Virgin Mary, and especially the prominence which such worship gave to the feminine virtues, had profoundly affected the earlier ideal of woman. The type of human excellence in antiquity, and in the dark ages which followed antiquity, had been a strong man. The

moral qualities which Paganism prized and exalted were those which are more often found in men than in women. The ideal of the Stoic was essentially virile. It was reserved for Christianity to cultivate the virtues of the heart and to teach the sanctity of weakness. Gentleness, purity, resignation, were exalted by the church, and inspired a moral enthusiasm which magnanimity, self-control, and fortitude aroused in the stern sages of Paganism. The ideal of human perfection had been feminized; it had ceased to be heroic and had become saintly. Christianity had raised to far higher honor than they had previously possessed the moral qualities in which women excel.

At the same time, feudalism, by making women the king's vassals, had increased their personal independence. The heiress of rich fiefs and many domains was an important personage politically as well as socially. She was a proprietor and an administrator; the equal of her husband, and often the superior of her poet-lover. The difficulties and dangers of castle life, and the possession of authority had developed in her a rare and precious quality, — a deep sense of personal responsibility.

Very naturally the poetical homage offered to a woman of exalted social position and of strong character would differ essentially from the love poems of a Propertius or Catullus to a venal *puella*

For the first time in the history of erotic poetry the lover addressed his lady as his superior — not in any feudal sense, for a mutual affection has levelled all artificial distinctions — but as a being nobler, better than himself, whose tenderness is to be won and kept only by the strenuous exercise of many virtues.

The knight, to enjoy his beloved's favor must be brave and generous, and gentleness must go hand in hand with his valor. He must be as discreet as he is eloquent, and as careful of his lady's name as he is careless of his own life in her service. Faithful must he be, with a heart-whole fidelity unknown to the prosaic and carnal lovers of antiquity. Humility and patience must be his as well as courage and courtesy; the virtues of the monk as well as those of the paladin. In a word, the typical lover as he is described by an army of knightly singers is the perfect man and all high qualities are his — save one.

There is no doubt that such an ideal, however imperfectly it was realized in action, was a puissant incitement to virtuous conduct and a constant counsel of perfection. More powerful still was its appeal to the strongest of our spiritual instincts, the desire of self-sacrifice, which is at once the root and aliment of all great passions. By making the happiness of one individual depend on the happiness of another, the bonds of self were loosened, and the true lover's

longing to give himself was fulfilled. In fine, the desire of the man for the woman, and the woman for the man, had been transmuted, by changes in social conditions and in habits of thought, into an ennobling and unselfish love and that love had been given a worthy medium of expression by a host of poets. The force and prowess of manhood were consecrated to the service of a lofty ideal. The spirit had descended in tongues of flame on its apostles, and Europe, stunned with dialectic, listened eagerly to the new gospel of love.

Why, then, did not this revelation satisfy the higher needs of earnest and passionate natures, who had found learning barren, art mechanical, and religion void of spiritual significance? Why could not solace be found in this enchanted region of poetry? Because these tender and elevated sentiments, this unselfish devotion, were consecrated to the service of an unlawful passion, and this new love which was regenerating the human heart, and giving speech to the dumb nations, was the love of another man's wife. The seeker after perfection could hardly find it in the glorification of adultery. *Les fruits de l'amour illégitime sont toujours amers,* and the wings of an illicit love are crushed beneath a burden of perfidy.

This was the spiritual inheritance, these were the conditions which obtained in Italy when Saint

Francis entered the religious life. Devotion, wisdom, and beauty were apparently extinct. The capacity for uplifting emotion, the gift of poetic expression, were bondslaves to lawless love. In the political world, the nascent industrialism of the Tuscan towns, the rise of a brood of rapacious princelings, the fierce enmities of city to city, and the civic strife in the burgs, showed vitality enough and to spare, but as these different forms of energy lacked direction, they were devastating, rather than fecundating forces.

How were these spiritual conditions changed by a man feeble in health, comparatively ignorant, utterly penniless; who was unaided by the temporal power, and who refused to borrow the might of the church? The answer to this query is not a new one: *quia multum amavit.* "Give me a place to rest my lever, and I will move the world," said Archimedes. The lever of Saint Francis was love, and its resting place was in the heart of man.

The Franciscan revival was the invasion of the realm of religious thought by emotion. It was the advent of tenderness into a sad and dreary universe.

It transformed the *hortus siccus* of the theologian into the *hortus inclausus* of an ardent and devout soul, and the Christ who in art had become a Byzantine emperor, and in theology had

been discussed into a frigid abstraction, returned as the teacher of Nazareth, the martyr of Calvary, to knock at the door of men's hearts.

As the artist must constantly turn to nature, lest his art become mere artifice, so must the religious seek again and again the moving tenderness of the Gospel, if they would be free from the letter that kills, the dogma that deadens human sympathies. This liberation of piety from the bonds of theology was the mission of Saint Francis. Possessing the practical good sense of the middle-class Italian, he was unpreoccupied with wire-drawn distinctions, unwearied with subtle analyses of divine essences. Mystical and visionary, as he was, a natural rationalism determined his attitude towards the dialectic of the doctors, and counselled him to disregard the scholastic chaff that pedants had been threshing, over and over again, ever since the days of Peter Lombard. "Christ so loved you that he lived and died for you. Love him and his creatures" is the *credo* of Saint Francis. A creed as free from intellectual subtilizing as it is untouched by the spiritual selfishness, the unsocial egotism, which chill the reader of the "Imitatione" like a cold breath from a tomb.

With Saint Francis began that great movement towards the secularization of religion which has gone on age after age in an ever-widening circle of

influence, making the practice of devotion an integral part of life, rather than a function at variance with life. With him piety ceased to be a professional affair, and holy living became possible to the layman. He re-established the doctrine of human solidarity. He extended the antique notion of the brotherhood of man with his fellow, to a kinship with all nature, animate and inanimate. His great heart overflowed with tenderness and compassion for every sentient creature that can love and suffer. The tie which unites all created things was visible to this gentle seer, who, anticipating the discoveries of modern science, saw the invisible links of that infinite chain which binds "*il nostro fratellino Jesulino*" to "our little brothers the birds."

Consequently the Franciscan revival meant the sanctification of human affection, and its introduction into the sphere of religious aspiration. Franciscan tenderness for humanity ignores the theological conception of bereavement being welcomed as a dispensation of Providence: witness the beautiful story of Lucchesio of Poggibonsi, a follower of Saint Francis, who, after a long and devout life spent in the society of a wife he dearly loved, refused to be separated from her after death, and lying down beside her made the sign of the cross and died peacefully, quite sure that God would not wish him to live on in loneliness.

The painters might well call Saint Francis patron, for he first made the mystery of the Incarnation a living reality. The effect on the plastic arts of the humanization of the Gospel narrative was not so immediate as its influence on the more impressionable and less technical art of the poet, but the humble *tableaux vivants* of the Nativity, and of the Adoration in the Manger which Saint Francis arranged in the Umbrian villages at Christmas, in order to bring the beauty and pathos of the Divine sacrifice home to Italian hearts through impressionable Italian eyes, have left an indelible impress on the plastic art of the Renaissance.

Not less fructifying in its influence on poetry was this humanization of things divine. The hymn of Saint Francis to the Sun, celebrating the strength and beauty of sun and moon, wind and fire and water, awoke an echo in a thousand hearts which had vibrated to the puissant charm of the good, brown earth and of common earthly things. Voicing devout aspiration in the terms of human affection, he employed the new medium, the speech of the people, in this noble, though rude hymn. Italian devotional poetry; the rapturous lyrics of Jacopone da Todi, the more chastened yet exquisitely poignant lauds of Girolamo Benevieni, down to the modern Tuscan peasant's songs to the Virgin were the fruits of this new field of poetic endeavor. The

*Cantico del Sole* proved as fertilizing as the rays of the sun itself. Saint Francis consecrated the speech of humble folk, the simple, limpid, straightforward language of every-day life and of peasants and burghers to pious uses, to celebrate man's blithesomeness in the beauty of earth, man's joyful aspiration to the glories of heaven. Poetry, which had been aristocratic and chivalrous, like the Tuscan noble who became a citizen of Florence, renounced its feudal state, and turned *Popolano.* Through the *Cantico del Sole* and the "Fioretti," the *toscaneggiamento* of the Italian language received a powerful impulse, and an admirable instrument of expression was perfected for Dante and Boccaccio. The modern Italians consider the "Fioretti" as a model of diction — of that simple, pellucid style which, though void of literary artifice, is never languid or trivial.

## II

If we would realize the fructifying power of the teaching and example of Saint Francis, we must compare them with the doctrines and methods of an earlier school of ethics, — a school, which from its remotest origins, had more completely severed virtue from interest than any other system of religion or philosophy which has obtained a lasting ascendency over the human mind, or satisfied the needs of the human soul.

Many years before, a man far less fortunate than Saint Francis, an exile, a slave, and a cripple, had, by the strength of a magnanimous soul, attained happiness and made of his life and work a magnificent hymn to divine providence. Never have the goodness of the Creator, the omnipresence of the infinite wisdom, been more profoundly felt or more forcibly proclaimed. Never has one so poor in all that the world can bestow, found within himself such inexhaustible store of spiritual treasure. That "the kingdom of heaven is within" has never been more clearly demonstrated than by the life of this pagan slave. With no hope of immortality, expect-

ing nothing, asking nothing, following virtue as a freeman, enfranchised by a noble despair, Epictetus enriched the world by the truly sublime spectacle of a conscience "*en équilibre dans le vide.*"

But if the sage was a friend of the gods, the saint was a lover of Christ. The Stoic founded his ideal of human felicity on the suppression of the affections, the devotee on the sanctification of the affections. Reason is the supreme arbiter of Epictetus, ardent faith of Saint Francis. The imagination which was sternly stifled by the former, was stimulated by the latter. The moral factor in the philosopher's ethical system was the dignity of man and the freedom of the will. The master-idea of the saint's theory of life was man's weakness and his need of love and pity. Mansuetude and joy were the virtues most esteemed by the Tuscan; magnanimity and self-control were the moral qualities most prized by the Roman. Epictetus' philanthropy was untender, as was natural enough in one who did not believe that pain and sorrow were afflictions, but opportunities furnished by the gods to prove man's virtue; Saint Francis's rigors were full of affection. The belief in the brotherhood of man was professed by them both with equal fervor, but Saint Francis extended his fraternal feeling to every sentient creature, and Gautama was not more tender to the brute creation.

The philosopher ignored the virtues of the heart; the saint was blind to the intellectual virtues. Epictetus exalted the will; Saint Francis enthroned the imagination. There is something cold and harsh in the stoic that is antipathetic to gentle and loving natures; there is a morbid and hysterical tendency in the saint that repels both positive and philosophical minds. The moral dignity of Epictetus was not without a touch of arrogance; the humility of Saint Francis was sometimes lacking in self-respect. By the doctrines of Epictetus, the mind is elevated; by the words of Saint Francis, the emotions are quickened; the one is a bracing tonic, the other a heart-warming cordial.

Saint and sage alike revered that holy poverty which means liberty by freeing man from narrow interests and mean anxieties. Epictetus was no cynic; he did not despise the graces and decencies of life; he would only have us remember that "*non dux sed comes voluptas;*" and if we "fix our affections on an earthen pot, we must say to ourselves that what we love is but an earthen pot, so that when it is broken we may not be downcast nor afflicted." Abstinence was but discipline for the body and exercise for the will; it was valuable merely to secure the dominion of the spirit over the flesh.

Saint Francis was not an ascetic. His renunci-

ation of the world's goods was also to ease himself of useless burdens, to secure freedom of spirit from petty cares. The Paupertas of which he was the *amoroso drudo*, the loving paramour, was not monastic poverty, that daughter of the horseleech which is ever crying, "Give, give!" but the noble poverty of Zeno, of Thoreau, of Mazzini, and of the apostles. Nowhere in the "Fioretti" is it stated that fasting and privation are in themselves pleasing to God. They are the means by which the man who would be free dominates the tyrant within, and Saint Francis's attitude towards mortification is rather that of the Stoic than the monk.

But where he differs from them both is in the spontaneous nature of his sacrifice, and in the joyousness of his renunciations. Hunger, cold, pain, humiliation are gifts which he blithely brings to his beloved. These are the trials which the true lover seeks for the loved one's sake. He elects to suffer, not proudly for the sake of self-dominion, like Epictetus, not gently, resignedly like Antoninus, in obedience to inscrutable laws, but gladly, ecstatically, feeling that through pain he becomes more worthy of the beloved.

This divine love was neither the languid quietism of Molinos, nor the hysterical transports of a passionate temperament debarred from a natural and healthy exercise of the affections. Saint Francis's

sacred ardor is best defined by his own words in praise of "Brother Fire": "*Et ello ê bello et jocundo, e robustioso, e forte.*"

The joy of the sage is more temperate. It is deeply imbued with religious feeling, but it is reasoned, not instinctive. The cry of a heart melting into inexpressible tenderness is almost inarticulate through excess of emotion. The philosopher's Jubilate is contained and its exaltation is controlled by a virile gravity. His most impassioned aspirations are expressed with austere simplicity; in treating great questions the wise men of the antique world disdained to appeal to the feelings or the imagination. The axioms of Epictetus possess the noble nudity of ancient marbles. "To have God for our maker and father and guardian should not that emancipate us from all sadness and all fear? . . . What can I, an old man and a cripple, do, but praise God? . . . I am a reasonable being, my mission is to praise God and I fulfil it . . . and I exhort you to join in the same song of praise."

There is no trace of the unction, the transports, or the childlike playfulness of the Umbrian in these terse, pregnant phrases. This is a religion for strong men, and Epictetus, to paraphrase the words of Plato, is no confectioner, but a physician of the soul. The wholesome bitterness of his teaching makes for spiritual health. But the reasoned felic-

ity of the thinker is pitched on a low key. It has no kinship with the blissful elation of Saint Francis, who seemed to share the soaring rapture of the song of his sister, the lark.

Calmness and equanimity Stoicism could bestow, or at least develop; but it is extremely doubtful whether any system of philosophy which aims at the suppression of the affections stimulates light-heartedness in its followers.

The Fioretti are a Gospel of joy. Their dominant note is gladsomeness. The Saviour who reveals himself to the disciple is no longer the "man of many sorrows," but "Christ, thy teacher, and for token thereof I will give thee this sign. As long as thou livest thou shalt never feel affliction of any sort nor sadness of heart." To the followers of Saint Francis cheerfulness became a duty; melancholy, or mere moodiness, a sin. *Accidia* was punished, if not in this world, then in that hell-pit where Dante heard the sullen folk gurgling their sad refrain in the mire under the foul swamp water, —

> *"Tristi fummo nel aer dolce che dal sol s'allegra.*
> *Portando dentro accidioso fummo*
> *Or ci attristiam nella belletta negra."*

And from this childlike blitheness, from this young delight in man and nature, sprang, naturally enough, a desire for expression, plastic or literary.

With happiness comes the wish and the strength to create. And therefore the light-heartedness of Saint Francis is more fertile than the high-heartedness of Epictetus.

Self-government, self-examination do not stimulate enthusiasm, and are inimical to the inrush of the spirit. The self-conscious mental attitude of the philosopher was unfavorable to spontaneity, fatal to inspiration. Fortitude, equanimity, and justice, steel and strengthen the soul, but love and faith are the fertilizing emotions which, poured upon the desert places of the spirit, cause it to bloom. Despair is sterile, and scepticism critical. To create, man must desire, believe, and hope. He must possess at once an inward vision and an outward blindness; seeing in the actual world as a tangible reality what as yet exists merely in his own mind, he gives palpable form to the indwelling image, and becomes, in his own degree, a creator.

The Vita Nuova and the frescoes of Giotto were the first-fruits of the Franciscan revival. Roman law, the noblest monument ever raised to justice, was the creation of the Stoic philosophy. Antique jurisprudence remains "one of the avowed moral beacons of the civilized globe." Saint Francis's gospel of joy has been preached all over the world, and the Fioretti have bloomed in the hearts of thousands ignorant of the name of the *Poverello*,

witness this English floweret gathered from the yellowed pages of an old book: —

"I do not know when I have had happier times in my soul than when I have been sitting at work, with nothing before me but a candle and a white cloth, and hearing no sound but that of my own breath, with God in my soul and heaven in my eye. . . . I rejoice in being exactly what I am, — a creature capable of loving God, and who, as long as God lives, must be happy. I get up and look for a while out of the window, and gaze at the moon and stars, the work of an Almighty hand. I think of the grandeur of the universe, and then sit down, and think myself one of the happiest creatures in it."

This is the *Cantico del Sole* translated into English prose. In them both, in the Italian poet and the poor Methodist woman, perfect love has cast out fear. The awful beauty of the starry vault, the immensity of its stellar spaces, bring to them no melancholy conviction of the insignificance of our tiny globe in this vast system of worlds, but a childlike gladness and wonder "at the golden balls of heaven tossed through the night by the Hand that made them." Inspired by love and faith, the sempstress and the unlettered saint share the serene conviction of the great astronomer who said: "I have studied the celestial clock too long not to believe in the clock-maker."

The Fioretti have not ceased to bloom on Italian soil. In the shadow of the great chestnut-trees above Pistoia, on the Tuscan hills, they linger. This modern hymn could be sung before Saint Francis's own representation of the "Nativity," the *Presepio*, dear to the painters. Has the "*Domine non sum dignus*," the inward cry of poignant tenderness and passionate self-abasement of a devout soul, contemplating the great sacrifice, ever found sweeter expression?

"*Tu dormi oh dolce amor, ma in tanto il cuore*
*Non dorme no, ma sorglia a tutte l' ore.*
*O mio bello e puro agnello*
*A che pensi, dimmi Tu*
*O amore immenso!*
*A morire per te, risponde, io penso.*

"*Ad a morir per me Tu pensi, oh Dio*
*A ch' altro amare fuor di Te poss' io?*
*Oh Maria speranza mia*
*S'io poc' amo il tuo Gesù*
*Non ti sdegnare!*
*Amalo tu per me s' io non so amare.*"

## III

THE fame of Assisi is wholly the gift of its saint, for the great church, goal of pilgrim and artist, is but one concrete celebration of Saint Francis in stone and mortar, sculpture and painting, bronze and mosaic.

*Ed ora ha Giotto il grido!* for if the first name of the town be that of Saint Francis, the second is that of Giotto, who stands the central figure of those that wrought with trowel and chisel and brush the chronicle of the saint, and the church which shrines it. It is not that other famous artists are lacking; it is not even that Giotto's best works are here — for them we go to Padua and Florence; it is because the double church offers the most imposing example in Italy of what the school of the fourteenth century considered to be the appropriate decoration of a huge church by mural painting, and because Giotto is the greatest exponent of that school. The works at Santa Maria dell' Arena in Padua are on a higher plane; the Spanish chapel of Florence is a remarkably perfect example of a *trecento* decorative scheme applied to a small space; the Pisan Campo Santo offers a whole panorama of fourteenth cen-

tury art, but the Assisan church far surpasses them all in beauty and solemnity of color, in picturesque bursts of light and depths of shadow. To the student of the *decorative effect* produced by painting in fresco upon walls and vaulting, it is perhaps the most important building in Europe: we say this advisedly, and without forgetting the Sistine Chapel, the Stanze of Raphael, the Ducal Palace of Venice, the Parmesan Cupola, and many another hall or chapel.

With Raphael, Michelangelo, and Correggio, we care about the individuality of the artist, so we do in Padua with Giotto, but in the church of Saint Francis what impresses us is the decorative splendor and beauty, what interests us is the suitability to its purpose of the method employed.

In Padua, we consider Giotto as the great progressive artist, the precursor of the Renaissance whose sentiment of nature, of simplicity, of expression, brings a new force to art; in Assisi, we think of him rather as the typical *quattrocento* painter. In his best works, his greatness is all his own, and is new to Italy and the world. In Assisi, we are interested principally by what lay ready to his hand, what was old already in Byzantium and Ravenna, the principles of mural painting; the method of producing a grand effect by color and patterns upon the walls of a dimly lighted building,

not flat-walled and vast like the Pisan campo, but abounding in complicated architectural forms and broken surfaces.

When we speak to-day of the mural quality in painting, we are apt to adduce Giotto as the typical exponent in the past, just as we name Puvis de Chavannes in the present; but this is not because Giotto invented the mural quality in Assisi, any more than Puvis invented it in the Panthéon. Giotto was its most brilliant exponent, because he was technically and spiritually the greatest artist who had displayed it for centuries, but the fundamental principles which underlie wall decoration could have been studied in Constantinople and Ravenna, nine hundred years before Giotto was born.

When we ask where did Giotto get the wonderful power of expression that he shows in his work, we reply, a little from masters and a great deal from himself; but if we are asked, how did he learn to make a wall effective by color and patterns, — patterns whether of men and women or of scrolls and plants — we must answer that he worked upon traditional lines, that some of his immediate forerunners were nearly as effective as he, and some of his remote forerunners were more effective.

When we say enthusiastically of Giotto, "There was a decorator for you! There was a muralist far more purely *decorative* than some later and even

greater men!" we are thinking, not of the superiority of his drawing and composition, but of the simple flatness of his masses, free from any elaborate modelling, the lightness and purity of his color, so suited to gloomy interiors, the excellence of his silhouette and his pattern. The layman may not deliberately reason to this effect; but he instinctively thinks of these qualities, because they are what impress him as decorative before he has time to go further in his mental appreciation to the qualities of draughtsmanship and dramatic composition. But the essentially decorative qualities did not belong especially to Giotto; he had no proprietary rights in them; they belonged to the history and development of mural painting, to the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines who had learned — centuries before Saint Francis, centuries even before the Master whom Francis served, came into the world — had learned, we say, that dimly lighted interiors required flat, pure colors with little modelling.

Now nearly all the interiors of the ancient world were dimly lighted; the mediæval Italian churches, with their narrow lancet windows of low toned jewel-like glass, were as dark as any of the antique buildings, so that the use of flat masses of pure color, the planning of an agreeable disposition of spots and of a handsome silhouette to these spots, became the canons of mediæval painting. These

early artists had mastered thoroughly the great controlling principle of decoration, the principle of the harmony of the painting with the surrounding architecture. Because the fourteenth century had not gone beyond this fortunate simplicity to the complexity of the fifteenth, and because it had attained to a science of draughtsmanship unknown to the thirteenth century and earlier times, we call the *trecento* the golden age of the mural painter. The layman not infrequently supposes that this condition of things obtained because Giotto deliberately eschewed elaborate modelling, and said to mural painting, "thus far and no farther shalt thou go!" In eight cases out of ten, this misconception comes because the layman has been reading Ruskin; in the other two cases, because he has been reading Rio or Lord Lindsay. In reality, Giotto said nothing of the sort; he was a great artist, he saw and felt with simplicity and dignity; doubtless he would, under any circumstances, have modelled with restraint, but if he had known how to do so, he would have put more modelling in his figures than he did, yes, and a good deal more of it.

Let us consider for a while, first, what motives have been imputed to Giotto; next, how his means were related to his motives, and what his methods, perforce, were, and lastly, what results he obtained.

Fifty years ago John Ruskin made Giotto the

fashion. The connoisseurs of the seventeenth century, the men whose fathers had perhaps seen Raphael, had surely seen the Urbinate's great rival, made small account of the earlier painters, to them the *Giotteschi* were barbarous, *roba vecchia,* rubbish. With Ruskin, however, the great son of Bondone took his place upon a throne. He sat there rightfully by virtue of the greatest talent which was given to any painter between Masaccio and the last great Greek or Roman artist of imperial days, but his ministrant swung the censer before him with such misplaced enthusiasm that the face of the great Tuscan was clouded for a half a century, until modern criticism dared to say nay to the poet of the "Stones of Venice" and the "Modern Painters."

Ruskin never admired anything that was unworthy (though he often fiercely contemned the worthy). He saw and praised Giotto's simplicity of treatment, but how strangely he praised, how utterly he misunderstood the artist's aim and insisted upon bringing back to the marksman game that was no spoil of his. Ruskin mistook timidity for reverence, and ascribed to the painter as a deliberate choice that which was in reality forced upon him by inexperience.

The reasoning which Ruskin, Rio, and others of their school followed, is peculiar. We will take as an example a fresco in which heavily draped

figures stand before a city gate upon greensward. In the said greensward every little blade and leaf is made out; there is no effect; you and I with our modern ideas would not like it at all. The critic, on the contrary, is enraptured. He cries, "Only see, Giotto has painted every leaf; he felt that everything which God made should be lovingly and carefully studied!" The draperies, on the contrary, are rather broadly and simply handled, and the author implies that it is because the artist knew that the stuffs, which were only artificial, not natural, were unworthy the careful study he had given the leaves. Such criticism as this utterly misled a portion of the English reading world for at least thirty years. The right treatment by the painter was wrongly praised by the writer. Giotto was lauded, especially for leaving out that which he was incapable of putting in; his figures are but little modelled, and this slight modelling happens to be admirably suited to the kind of decoration which he was doing, but it was slight because he did not know how to carry it further. When he painted a Madonna on a panel to be seen and examined at close quarters, that which was a virtue in his decoration became a fault in his easel picture. Take the grass and draperies just mentioned; Giotto had not yet learned to paint drapery realistically, but he had the sentiment of noble composition,

and he arranged his folds simply and grandly, and painted them as well as he knew how, pushing them as far as he could. When he came to the grass, he found it much easier to draw a lot of little hard blades and leaves, than to generalize them into an effect. He did not know how to generalize complicated detail. The drapery was one piece, and he could arrange it in a few folds, but the blades of grass were all there, and he thought he must draw every one — he did not know how to do otherwise. Ruskin and Rio and Lord Lindsay, all regard this incapacity as a special virtue based upon a spiritual interpretation of the relative importance of things in nature and art. They account as truth in Giotto what was really the reverse of truth. In looking at such a scene as that represented in the fresco, no human being could see every blade of grass separately defined. A general effect of mass would be truth, and Giotto would have grasped it if he could have done so, but he was not yet a master of generalization.

A whole class of writers upon Christian art is like the Prior in Browning's poem, who says to Fra Lippo Lippi: —

> "Your business is to paint the souls of men.
> Give us no more of body than shows soul;"

but these writers, while appreciating the effect of certain qualities in Giotto and his followers, wholly

misunderstood their intention. He did not leave his figures half modelled for the praise of God or for the sake of expressing soul. We might just as well say that it was for the sake of spiritual aspiration that his foreshortened feet always stood on the points of their toes, or that his snub profiles were intended to suggest meekness.

He was undoubtedly a devout churchman, every man was such in those days, but he worshipped the goddess Truth too, and put as much realism into his work as he could compass. He never thought that he could better express the spiritual nature of man by a slight or careless rendering of the body, the envelope through which that same spirit manifests itself.

It is an important fact in painting, especially in decorative painting, that in measure as an artist refines his work he may with advantage suppress one detail after another of its modelling. By the more he refines his work is meant the nearer to perfect correctness he brings his forms by truth of outline, and by putting his modelling on exactly the right spot. But this knowing what to leave out is one of the most subtile, one of the last kinds of knowledge that come to the painter. This system of elimination argues upon his part the possession of a high degree of technical accomplishment. When he can draw and paint every detail of his subject, then, and not till

then, he can suppress judiciously, for a man may leave out intelligently only what he has already entirely possessed. Great painters have thus instinctively commenced by making minutely detailed studies. Now, Giotto never made one such in his life; he did not know how. He was a beginner possessing magnificent natural gifts, still a beginner, a breaker of new paths. He drew and painted the human body exactly as well as he knew how to, leaving out elaborate modelling simply because he was unable to accomplish it. One lifetime would not have sufficed this pioneer of art for the achievement of all that he did and for the compassing of a skilful technique as well.

Let us go with Giotto into his church, and see what effect he attains. Even in Italy, there is hardly any building more picturesque than is this triple church of Saint Francis of Assisi, the strange group in which three buildings are piled one upon the other, above the body of the Umbrian Saint. The little town, backed upon the flank of Mount Subasio, looks out upon a vast panorama of rolling hills and a valley where Tiber and Arno rise almost side by side. It is a battered, brown, mediæval burg clustered about the fluted columns of a temple, which announces that Minerva reigned there before Francis, but to-day the ruling presence is that Paupertas, whom we see painted as the mystic bride

of the saint above the high altar. The town is forlornly, desolately, desperately poor, all save the splendid church, which, rising on huge arches above the valley, was founded there in 1228 by the Franciscan monks, the disciples of poverty.

We go to it by a long arcaded cloister, unlike the approach to any other such building. The columns seem to march with us like brown pilgrims; at the end of the enclosure rises a mass which is a puzzle of angles, staircases, and terraces of superimposed masonry. No distant buildings overtop the low cloister walls, and the vast, clear space of sky tells that one is upon a height. A low door is entered, and now the mountain seems above one, upon the backs of those broad low arches which go before, processional, yet depressed almost to earth, as if they bore upon them all the burdens of man's ills, to lay them upon the altar at their dim vista end. This low massiveness of the arches makes the first and last impression in the under-church of Assisi, an impression complicated and enriched by the sense of a population of saints pictured upon their far-reaching curves. It is at first confusing; everything is dominated by a sense of color, of warm dusky reds, of ultramarine grayed by the incense smoke, of brighter spots where embossed halo or curious pattern shines dimly, of distant openings where the jewelled glitter of the stained glass makes

the surrounding gloom still deeper and more rich. The middle ages are calling to us with that color-voice which sounds from the walls of every decorated Gothic church, the strong and simple chord of red and blue and gold.

The true way to see the frescoes is to linger in the south transept during the morning service. Then the organ and the choral stir the air in the low space; the flame of the candles leaps and flickers; the colors seem to pulsate; the angels of Cimabue lean from the vaulting where they stand about Madonna, and the half-length saints of Simone Martini still listen after five centuries of choristers have sung to them. These saints of Martini are grand and lovely at once. Why is it that with their long oval faces, their pinched nostrils, their almond eyes, their thin-lipped, tiny mouths, they are yet so stately and solemn? They are out of drawing; such men and women could not exist. They are, indeed, slightly ridiculous at times, and yet you cannot defy that impression which, felt slightly even before the battered works of unknown masters in third-rate galleries, here deepens into the fullest force which it has in Italy. The Giottos of Padua, unrivalled among the compositions of the fourteenth century, do not at first strike one as do these, because of the grandly perfect setting of the latter. The painters have here un-

dertaken to do exactly what was the full measure and capacity of the medium and of the system of decoration which they used, not a bit less and not a bit more. That is the secret of their strength.

We may apply our own experience of to-day to understanding this secret of the *Giotteschi*. Take an orchestral performance, a symphony concert. If we are given just enough of it, we go away impressed, the measure of our capacity is exactly full; if the programme is twice too long, the latter half is wasted, the impression of the whole is dulled. So with these figures of Assisi. They stand up in simple, strong masses of nearly flat tint, often picked out with little minute patterns of gold or color in sword, belt, and crown, and starred and bordered drapery, never complicated in form by carefully rounded modelling, and, because of this relative flatness, they are ten times more decorative. *They have conformed to the law of sacrifice.*

Here it all is then, the example of the fourteenth century set to the mural painter of to-day; here are the flat surfaces almost devoid of modelling; here the pure colors which tell in the gloom, as no more graduated tones possibly could tell; here in the individual frescoes are the handsome general patterns suited to the surrounding form of lunette or spandrel or trefoil; and here is that restraint in the use of planes of atmospheric perspective forced upon the

*trecento* masters by their lack of science, — all qualities directly enhancing the decorativeness, the murality, of the work and all, *nota bene*, qualities not belonging specially to Giotto or Martini, but which were recognized already in Memphis and Athens, Rome and Byzantium.

If we pass on to those qualities of a painter which were particular to Giotto, not merely as a muralist, but as an individual man, we shall hardly find their highest expression in Assisi; rather, we should find it in Padua. Nevertheless there is quite enough here to show us his main characteristics. It teaches us that, like other masters of his time, he cannot yet subtly differentiate expression, but that, unlike others, his expression is more intense, more forceful, more varied. His heads are more robust and less subtile than Duccio's. They have long, narrow eyes, short, snub noses, firm mouths, square jaws, and powerful chins; he divides them, not individually, but typically, into adolescent, adult, and aged heads. His feet are unsteady; his hands not yet understood; his draperies are for their time wonderful, simply, even grandly arranged, and if they do not express the body, at least they suggest it and echo its movements.

His animals, too small and often faulty enough, are sometimes excellent; and, like every other mediæval artist, if he wanted to put in a sheep or a

horse or a camel, he put it in without any misgivings as to knowledge of the subject. Neither did this architect entertain any scruples regarding architecture, when he chose to paint it and, like his fellows, he set Greek temple of Assisi, Romanesque convent, and Gothic church, all upon the same jack-straw like legs, — that is to say, columns which made toys of all buildings, big or little. First and last and best, we see him as a miracle of compositional and dramatic capacity, and with this last quality, he took his world by storm.

Men before him had tried to tell stories, but had told them hesitatingly, even uncouthly, Giotto spoke clearly and to the point. This shepherd-boy, whose mountain pastures could be seen from her Campanile, taught grammar to the halting art of Florence. He taught the muse of the *trecento* to wear the buskin, so that his followers, however confused their composition might be, were at least clear in the telling of their story. Indeed he was such a dramaturgist that men for a full hundred years forgot, in the fascination of the story told, to ask that the puppets should be any more shapely, that they look one whit more like men and women.

And no wonder his contemporaries were dazzled, for Giotto added all this new science in art, this realism, this expressive force, this telling of a tale, to the solid qualities of the *trecento* craftsmen, push-

ing even the latter beyond the capacity of the best muralists of his time. For if the wall-painter was simple perforce, Giotto was simple also by choice; simple in his arrangement of figures, never crowding them together as some of his followers did, simple in his draperies, neither crinkling them in tiny folds like Duccio, nor twisting them like Cimabue. In color, too, he is admirable: for a real color endowment with subtile variety we must wait a generation longer (for the Venetians, or rather for the Veronese subjects of Venice, for Avanzi and Altichieri upon the walls of the Paduan chapels of Saint Felix and Saint George); but what the master of Assisi undertakes to do, he accomplishes perfectly: here are measure, sobriety, dignity and richness of color, the latter quality greatly enhanced, no doubt, by age and warm reflections from the other walls with their gilding and their candle-lighted altars.

It is well to linger in the church after it is closed to the worshipping peasants, and, climbing to a level with the frescoes, gain a greater intimacy with their pictured people, going close to the really lovely faces of women in the picture where a child plunges headforemost from a window in one corner, and is miraculously restored to life in the other, and to examine the richly embossed gold background to Martini's half-length saints, who seem to watch us as from a tribune.

Some of the finest wall pictures are ascribed to Taddeo Gaddi. Of making many books there is no end, doctors have disagreed, and no one can say yes or no conclusively, regarding many of these frescoes. For our part, remembering certain other works, we were ready to echo Longfellow's "Gaddi mi fece," and with Ouida to bid the passer-by, "Pray for the repose of the great Taddeo's soul." The works of the *trecento* have become a sort of conventual property, a glory of the school, not of the individual, for modern critics have handed about the frescoes of the Spanish chapel, the Pisan Campo Santo, and the Assisan church from Tuscan to Sienese, and from Sienese to Tuscan again. Does it greatly matter? There is room enough in those dark carven stalls, behind the altar of Assisi, for Cimabue and Giotto, Martini and Gaddi, Giunta and Puccio. There they may throne it together, and as year after year the long line of pilgrims passes to the saint's shrine, may see another and more thoughtful procession of students of the vaults and walls, and may know THEIR pilgrims too.

From end to end, the church is a delight to the eye; apse and transepts where they cross above the high altar are finest of all; everywhere is the deeply chorded harmony of red, blue, and gold, colors that symbolism made conventional, the red of Christ's blood and of his garments, the blue of

heaven and of his mantle, and the gold of his crown. Now and then a clear white light comes through some door, and cuts upon this rich color, like the high voices of the boy choristers against organ tones. Perhaps the most fascinating effect is yielded by the ultramarine, that ultramarine which was sent to the friars as gift of a pious princess, a mediæval, vase-bearing Magdalen whose empty jar still stands upon an altar five hundred years after its contents have been spread over the walls. The greatest charm of these colors is in their duskiness, a certain dim splendor, the dulling added by the candles of fifteen votive generations, and by the accidents of time, for these lower wall frescoes have been rubbed by the armor of knights, the mantles of kings, and the goatskins of peasants.

The focal point of the under church pictorially, as well as architecturally, is the cross-vaulting above the high altar. Here, in four great lunettes, Saint Francis is glorified by Giotto, and on festa days by many hundred candles; Poverty and Obedience, Chastity and Humility, triumph with him. There are attributes in card-board towers; haloes, round, square, and hexagonal; angels, very busy in rewarding the good, confuting the unwise, and punishing the bad; a child throwing stones at Poverty; a centaur properly put in his right place by Prudence, who shows him that he does not belong in such

fine company; curious and entertaining figures, sometimes toy-like, often dignified, but all making up a rich and admirable decoration under the wide low arches of this *crociera*, especially in the frescoes of Paupertas and Castitas. Some of the female figures, in spite of their uniformity, have great charm; and while all are gravely earnest, some are gravely sweet. Dante, as so often elsewhere, has collaborated here, bringing his actual personal presence to this first allotting of a task which generations of painters to come were to work out upon the walls of Italy, ever more skilfully wedding their "lovely music to immortal words," till the Stanze and the Sistine should close the cycle.

In the south transept are admirably simple frescoes attributed to Giovanni da Milano, whose figures are, like Giotto's elongated. Hard by, one of the early Orsini lies upon his tomb, and his pinched but charming face seems so out of place in his illustrious family of robber nobles, that one is not surprised at his choosing the church, but *does* wonder that he reached a cardinalate. Some of the glory of Giotto and Gaddi is reflected upon Lo Spagna's canvas of a Madonna with saints, or else it is really one of his very best, but what an anachronism is the *picture frame*, how artificial and unreasonable the cutting off and isolation pro-

duced by this rectangle stuck about the picture, instead of the pinnacled setting of an early altar-piece or the painted border of a fresco. Close by on a lower wall of the transept under Cavallini's Crucifixion is a famous Madonna of Giotto, rich in color, impressive, lovely, and very much out of drawing. Compare it with the solemn Virgin of Giunta Pisano, not far from it. They are wholly different; with Giotto, we have the type of the thirteenth century, that type which smiled from the stone foliage of Rheims before Giotto was born, which prays under a veil and fights under a helmet, answering the needs of a whole age, and which is human and sympathetic. Cimabue's Virgin is like Giunta's, hardly human at all; she is no individual mother, but rather, under her low falling veil, a mother of mankind, a sort of mysterious Hindu goddess who has taken her slow way over the stepping stones of Persia and Byzantium and Cyprus, and sat down in this Italian church, still an Oriental.

One passes on from Giottino to Puccio Capanna, and to Simone Martini's chapel of the saint who emulated Saint Francis' generosity, — Saint Martin of Tours. These frescoes are among the best in the church; representative of the master; dainty with his usual delicate broidering of gold patterns and chasing of haloes; curious, too, with their touch of *trecento* archæology in the Roman armors, but in them

the composition seems confused after the frescoes in the southern transept.

Indeed fresco follows fresco with such bewildering reduplication that one passes at last with some sense of relief to the change of impressions afforded by a small Campo Santo of sculptured monuments in a kind of atrium crossing the western end of the nave. Here upon these tombs are such romantically juxtaposed titles as only the crusading ages could show; of murdered dukes of Spoleto, of a royal monk who had worn the crown of Jerusalem and the knotted cord of Saint Francis, of a Lusignan whose queenship united the antique name of Cyprus to the Homeric name of Hecuba. Her sepulchre is as strange as her appellation: the queen's face, of the usual *trecento* type, and somewhat wooden, is twisted oddly awry; the angels who draw the draperies aside (this bit of bad taste appears in very early tombal sculpture) contort their wings like fluttering birds; while the royal daughter, who is seated above with one leg crossed high over the other in the most *gaillard* attitude ever seen on a tomb, appears only to lack her banjo, or, if you will, her lute. She is so unconventional and *débonnaire* as to appear accountable for the grimace and commotion of the queen and her attendant angels.

Nothing that can be written of the lower church of Assisi can give an adequate idea of its combi-

nation of solemnity with unbounded variety and richness. Visitors to San Marco of Venice, or the basilicas of Ravenna, know what this means, but in Assisi mosaic is lacking, and the decorator, forced to depend upon pigment, draws from it magnificent results. There is not quite the depth of color yielded by the little glass tubes, and here Limoges enamel is the simile which comes constantly to the mind ; it is as if one stood in a vast copper reliquary covered with the blues and greens of the Limousin craftsmen.

A narrow staircase leads from the sacristy off the north transept to the upper church, which springs upward from the heavy arches of the lower one like a burst of harp music after the thunder of an organ. Even in Italy there is no such transition elsewhere. It is like the Divine Comedy built in stone; pictured below with trials and purifications, and above, under its soaring arches, with the angels of Paradise. Only the *Inferno* is lacking, and rightly, for it had no place in the all-loving heart of Saint Francis.

It seems incredible that any pigment should so nearly approach the richness of mosaic, and the upper church of Assisi certainly equals any extant example of what fresco can do in pure decoration. Evidently not even a Gothic architect when here in central Italy could avoid building a church which

should be, first of all, a preparation for the fresco-painter. The lines are long and soaring, but the narrow lancet windows take up but little space; the upper part of each bay is slightly recessed, and thus the lower portion of the nave wall is thrown forward, as if to offer a veritable parade ground for Giotto and his pupils, a real *scena* on which Saint Francis and his companions may enact the drama of their lives. Cimabue has the choir and north transept; Giunta the southern one; Cimabue again, with his pupils, the upper nave walls. Blue and green are the prevailing colors, as in the mosaics of Ravenna; a tawny orange is also present in large masses, and a warm Venetian red in much smaller quantities.

The Cimabues and Giuntas have suffered greatly, yet are delicious in color, and again in choir and transepts the walls seem as if made of Limoges work, such Limoges as one occasionally sees where the enamel has flaked away in parts from the copper, producing a rich medley of color. This medley is largely accidental; it is the fortunate handiwork of "Brother Rain." "Brother Rain," whom Francis loved as he did all things, is very active in Assisi for five months of the year; with "Brother Wind," who howled so fiercely around our little *albergo* on March nights, he roams the town and sweeps the mountain. More than once he has forced his way

through the roof, and sent trickling messengers down among the saints and angels. But when the impulse has passed, he has been ashamed of his depredations upon the house of the gentle Saint Francis, and has tried to at least temper the mischief by turning the blues he has touched to most lovely greens that run from turquoise to emerald, and render the beautiful church more beautiful. Photographs have made the lower nave frescoes familiar friends; they were probably planned and partly executed by Giotto, but it is perilous work painting poetry, especially the poetry of the Fioretti; yet if the result is sometimes trivial, it is often dignified, falling below the frescoes of Padua and the lower church, but affording interest, entertainment, and sometimes great pleasure. There are subjects of all kinds, — preachments, investitures, and above all visions, visions of all sorts, from the sublime to the puerile. There has been endless pasture here for Ruskin and Rio and Lord Lindsay, room too for those who pursue the investigations disdained by the soul-seekers. These researches place many, indeed most of the frescoes upon a doubtful basis as to authenticity and prove only the strong and ever present influence, first, of Cimabue, then, of his greater pupil. The frescoes on the upper wall ascribed to the former master, representing the life of Noah, have a wild force that is western, yet suggests the

Oriental, and one seems to see always in their backgrounds Athos instead of Ararat. A painter was at work away up among them upon a tower which reached the vaulting above, and rolled upon wheels below like some such "city-taker," as we read of in classical authors. He came down and talked with us, and said that he should only restore flat tints, and fill in outlines, but this little word "outlines" made us very thoughtful; fancy any one "restoring" Giotto's outlines where faint and even partly erased! One almost wished the tower *was* a city-taker, and that one might have the enemy's privilege of shooting the artist before he had done another day's restoration; such violence would have found no little stimulus in our memories of the Pisan Campo Santo, and not only of "outlines" there, but of "flat tints" as well. One must be careful, however, about wholesale condemnation of restoration; some of it is intelligent, viz.: that which removes, not that which adds.

Day after day, at early morning, at noon, and at sunset, we saw the church again and again, and the impression never left us that it afforded the richest example we had ever seen of fresco color applied to ecclesiastical architecture.

## IV

Assisan inhabitants, mediæval or modern, at first appear quite superfluous. There seems no room for them, after one has thought of Saint Francis and Saint Clara, for the memory of them fills the town. But Dante and Giotto, as visitors to be sure, were noteworthy enough; and gradually one thinks of those gentlemen of quality who rode away with Saint Francis for the wars which he never reached; of the bishop who set him in the ranks, to him more militant than those of the crusaders; of the priest whose tiny chapel he restored, begging and building at once, and of the many others who figure in the painted drama of the church. That the town existed before Francis came to give it interest, Minerva's columns testify; that it has existed since, through successive centuries, is proved by a few typical Italian palaces, palaces which must be surprised enough that their masters should have elected to build them here.

Some one among these palace-masters there must have been who thought the town worth holding for there is a *rocca* high upon the hill above. It is a stately castle enough; but, like most Italian *rocche*, seems a bit thin of wall and card-board-like to one

who has in mind the memory of Couci or Château Gaillard. Nevertheless, seen through the framework of the open door to the upper church, with the tender greensward of early spring before it, and the snow slopes of Mount Subasio behind, the Castello is not a little effective and beautiful. The town, but for its sanctuary, is forlorn, mournful, and poverty-stricken. The haggard figure who brings her hollow cheeks and her rags as wedding portion upon the vaulting above the high altar of Francis, has made the town her own, but with the ownership has come little of the cheerfulness of the all loving saint. Not a trowel has been put to brick for three centuries, one would say. The houses look old, bleak, and desolate; is there anything except stone within them? Are there any beds there or linen or tables spread comfortably with white cloths for ever so humble a meal? May one lie softly or sit warmly there, or find anything save shelter from rain? Did any one ever build a fire in them? It all looks flinty, like the bed of the saint himself; the windows gape in sashless indifference to winter, and we saw many doors just wide and high enough to admit a man, suggestive of a time when a narrow opening was easier to defend than a wide one. There are frescoes here and there, many Gothic arches, and in its climbing streets Assisi is like a poor relation of Perugia. On its grand square (as well ask

an Italian to breathe without lungs as even the smallest mediæval burg of the peninsula to be without its grand square) are one or two heavy looking palaces, like exiles from some happier town, mouldering in dead Assisi, and on the grand piazza, by the side of a tall and sturdy tower, are six slender, fluted columns and a pediment. This temple has been a high-water mark of fashion in æsthetics; to it Goethe climbed, and from it he returned to the valley, disdaining to dilute his impressions by a visit to the sanctuary of Saint Francis!

*Che, che,* Messer Wolfgang! there are many better temples, but where is there a better church of its kind. Assisi is the city of the saint, not of the goddess. Those, however, were the days of Winckelmann and Lessing, of the Medicean Venus and the Laocöon, and he who would build an Iphigenia in Aulis cared greatly for the templework of even the latest descendants of Trojan Æneas. But Italy is full of such marriages of Faustus and Helena, where antiquity and the middle ages stand hand in hand, and the Renaissance blooms at their side. Goethe saw plenty of such juxtapositions afterwards of tower and temple and church, and no one who remembers his love of Strasburg spire will believe that he would have stood unmoved had he once entered the lower church of Saint Francis.

For our part, if we had to find a goddess to build

for in Assisi, our temple should be under the invocation of her who was "*Clara nomine, vita clarior, clarissima moribus.*"

We may see her to-day, this Saint Clara, who was the beloved disciple and friend of Saint Francis, and to whom he went for help and sympathy during his sorest trials. Her church with its lofty tower and its gay red-and-white stripes — over-gay for so austere a saint — lies close to the gate, and the road passes beneath a huge buttress. Here, though her true home was at San Damiano, the convent outside the walls, her embalmed body is shown by a rosy young sister in the habit of the Poor Clares.

You descend a flight of steps into the darkness of a crypt, and stand among the brilliant marbles of Monte Subasio, and look into a vague, dusky mirror in which glints of gold are seen. Presently a ghost-like something moves across its inner surface, and the startled perceptions have hardly recognized a tall, white nun's cap, when candles grow into a dim flame, and a vision forms itself of a profile darkly silhouetted against light, — of a low brow, strongly set lips, and a full round chin, of a reclining figure in the brown Franciscan habit, girt with a knotted cord. Is this the face of an ascetic? Unless the flickering light plays strange tricks, the lines of this mummied profile show wilfulness and passion, strength of purpose and of emotion. And were they

lacking in the girl, young, beautiful, and rich, who left her father's house by stealth, to join the little group of holy madmen, who persisted in her purpose, in spite of every kind of opposition, and finally counted her own mother and sister among her nuns at San Damiano? Was she wanting in fire and energy when the Saracens scaled the walls of her convent, and she repulsed them, pyx in hand; the marauders hurrying away from the sight of a gaunt, terrible figure which brandished a strange talisman and called down curses on them in an unknown tongue? Was she poor in will and force, this friend of Saint Francis who for many years after his death, indeed until her own, defended against the Pope himself the "Rule" of her dear master, that "Rule" of 1221 which devoted the Franciscans to the Holy Poverty their founder so loved?

This is no relic revealed by dream or miracle centuries after the death of the sainted one, and conveniently discovered at some time of need; it is the real body of the girl, Chiara della Scifa, who was living in this same town when crusaders were still harboring here on their way through the mountain passes to Ancona and Palestine. These lips talked with Saint Francis, and on one fourth of October, six hundred and seventy-six years ago, kissed his dead hand as his body was borne past

her in San Damiano by shouting Assisans, rejoicing unseasonably that the relic was theirs at last and forever.

Saint Francis's pilgrims find most of their holy places outside the walls of the town. The churches of Assisi are commemorative only, but the convent of San Damiano, the little cell enclosed in the cold splendors of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the hermitage of San Francesco delle Carcere, and the monastery of Rio Torto, are filled with his spiritual presence. In his actual environment, seeing his stone bed, the cave where he dwelt *povero e lieto*, the crucifix to which he prayed, the wooden pillow on which he laid his head, the rose-thickets that tore his poor, emaciated body, the trees wherein the doves he blessed nested, and brooded; these actual things which he touched and saw and loved seemed to vivify the memory of him until the past became the contemporaneous.

The memory of the saint is closely knit to the souvenir of that little group of friends and disciples who were faithful to him in life and death, who clung to his "Rule," and endeavored to realize his ideal of the religious life; Fra Leone, his "*Pecorello di Dio*," whose biography of his beloved master, written only a few months after Saint Francis's death, is the most intimate and personal record of him which we possess; Egidio and Ruffino and

Angelo, "the three Companions," and Bernardo da Quintavalle, the rich proprietor of Assisi, the saint's first convert. Then there were Fra Masseo, the good simpleton, who was so enraptured by the thought of the divine love that he could only coo like a wood pigeon; the converted troubadour and "king of verses," Fra Pacifico; Brother Juniper, the comic personage, and *enfant terrible* of the group, and many others, knights, gentlemen, and contadini, all united by love and adoration for Saint Francis.

Nor was his friendship confined to companions of his own sex; like his divine Master, he inspired and returned the affection of good women. He turned to Saint Clara for counsel and help in all the crises of his career; after his death, his disciples accounted her his dearest friend; and it was to her that Fra Leone sent his personal souvenirs of Saint Francis to be kept until more auspicious times. The "Rule" which Saint Francis made for the poor Clares, lost for centuries, was found quite recently in the clothing of Saint Clara. Before his last visit to Riete the saint, already infirm in body, was carried to San Damiano to see her for the last time.

When dying, he sent for his dear "Brother," Giacobba di Settesoli, a lady of the noble house of the Frangipani, and broke the rules of the cloister in allowing her to visit him on his death-

bed. Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventura were a little shocked by the innocent freedom of Saint Francis, and by his frank demonstrations of affection for this lady, who, in 1226, though a widow, was still young, but Fra Leone finds them perfectly natural, and recounts the incident with his usual tranquil simplicity. The layman, of course, sees only in this absence of monasteric prudery another proof of *il Poverello's* angelic candor. After his death, the little following of friends clung to each other for comfort and support, and to the town in which he was buried.

So haunting is his memory, so completely does he still possess the place, that as we leave Assisi and descend the hill for the last time, it is easy to fancy that something of his personality still remains, and to picture the slight figure of a thin, dark young man, with delicate, worn features, fiery eyes, a trifle dimmed by weeping, and long wasted hands. This is the dusty road where he so often walked, singing with Brother Egidio, and admonished the folk by the way, saying, in his "sweet yet thrilling voice": "O, love and serve God, and repent perfectly of your sins." And the pilgrim to Assisi who has dwelt for some little space with this sweetest of all saints will add, with childlike Brother Egidio: "Do what my spiritual father says to you, for he always says what is best."

# RAPHAEL IN ROME

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## I

In the years which began the sixteenth century, the art of Italy attained its meridian in its capital city and in the house of its supreme rulers, through the painting of the Stanze and the Sistine chapel. There has never in the history of art been a *milieu* more favorable and more trying. On the one hand, enthusiasm had reached the very highest point, the tree nurtured painfully, lovingly by the banks of the Arno was ready to bear fruit; in the Vatican had just been enthroned a pope who willed tyrannously that his ideal should be attained, the ideal of an environment unsurpassed in beauty and inspiration by anything which the world had seen.

On the other hand, all the art of Florence, the art which was an inheritance from Giotto and Donatello, Masaccio and Lippo, and which was actually in the hands of Botticelli, Perugino, and Signorelli was ready to pour, bubbling at the point of its highest enthusiasm, into the channel of Papal service. Great artists stood clustered about the throne: Giuliano da Sangallo, founder of a dynasty of archi-

tects, Bramante, to whom had been allotted the planning of the greatest church in Christendom, humanists and poets and cardinals who were more famous as collectors than as temporal princes. Luca Signorelli and Pietro Perugino were still upon their scaffolding of the Sistine chapel; the young Michelangelo was already preparing his drawings, and soon would thunder and lighten from the vaulting. To conquer in such company was to conquer utterly; Raphael Sanzio was summoned from Florence by Pope Julius, and within a short space of time three peers, Bramante, Michelangelo, and Raphael, as if so many counterparts of the triple ranges of their master's tiara, crowned the art of the Revival in the Eternal City.

Raphael's conquest of his surroundings was almost magical; he arrived a youth, well-spoken of as to skill, yet by reputation hardly even *par inter pares;* in ten short years, how long if we count them as art-history, he died, having painted the Vatican, the Farnesina, world-famous altar-pieces, having planned the restoration of the entire urbs, having reconciled enemies and stimulated friends, and having succeeded without being hated.

He achieved this success by his great and manifold capacity, but, most of all, because in art he was the greatest assimilator and composer who ever lived. The two words are each other's complements; he

received impressions, and he put them together; his temperament was exactly suited to this marvellous forcing-house of Rome, for a Roman school never really existed, it was simply the Tusco-Umbrian school throned upon seven hills and growing grander and freer in the contemplation of Antiquity.

To this contemplation, Raphael brought not only a brilliant endowment but an astonishing mental accumulation; the mild eyes of the Uffizi portrait were piercing when they looked upon nature or upon art, and behind them was an alembic in which the things that entered through those eyes fused, precipitated, or crystallized as he willed.

While yet a lad, and fresh from the teaching of Timoteo Viti, he had looked with Perugino upon the Umbrian landscape, perhaps the noblest in Italy; he had seen Pietro frame his figures in its depths of golden serenity, and in those figures he had studied sweetness and sentiment, sentiment which, better than his master, he could withhold from lapsing into sentimentality. Later he vibrated to the note sounded by a mightier master, and the somewhat sheeplike sweetness of his Peruginesque Madonnas grew more subtly sweet, more humanly expressive. Usually Raphael bettered his instruction, but no one has ever refined upon either the subtility or the capacity for expression of Leonardo da Vinci. New compositional combinations, too, he learned from

Leonardo, and here it needed but a hint, a touch, and Raphael could go on embroidering forever, ringing all the changes possible to his three-figure composition of Madonna, the Christ-child, and the Baptist.

With equal responsiveness, he answered to the influence of his friend and comrade Fra Bartolommeo, feeling at once the importance of the monumental grouping which the Frate was bringing as his contribution to the succession of the school, feeling it at once and applying it as soon as felt in his own fresco of San Severo in Perugia, a work modelled upon Bartolommeo's Judgment, and to become in turn the model for his own Disputà.

He must have gone, like all others, to the great hall and seen there the cartoon of Michelangelo, young, almost as himself, yet who in that cartoon drew the human body as none had drawn it since the Greeks, and, to Raphael who was to be himself past-master of composition, this Battle of Pisa (as well as the Battle of Anghiari hard by it) must have said ten thousand things. He had copied in the Carmine, and the lad Masaccio, who died young, poor, almost unknown, contributed to the man who died young and world-famous, at least one figure, the Saint Paul, which, studied and remembered, was transferred years later from Raphael's portfolio to the cartoon that we see in South Kensington

Museum to-day. He had gone up and down the streets of Florence, and into her palaces and churches, he had read her pictured thought upon the walls, and at Mariotto's tavern had talked with those who evolved that thought, with Filippino and Botticelli, with the young Michelangelo and the old Andrea della Robbia. At least, we must believe that he had done all this, for he was in the midst of these men, well liked and eager to receive; he had not only looked, he had worked upon canvases which the Museums of the world have disputed: Madonnas in long succession, del Cardellino, del Gran Duca, dei Canigiani, del Baldacchino, the Resurrection, the Coronation, the Borghese Entombment, and these pictures were better credentials than was the letter which Giovanna of Urbino sent him.

## II

VASARI says that Raphael was summoned to Rome by the advice of Bramante, and this is more likely to be true than not; his achievements alone would not have sufficed but Urbino was strong at the court of Rome, because of Julius's personal relations and ambitions and more still, as far as an artist's recommendation was concerned, through the great reputation and position of the Urbinate architect.

At sometime in the year 1509 Raphael began to paint in the Sala della Segnatura; the task was as difficult a one as could be found; he had not only to prove that technically he could surpass his predecessors in these rooms, but also to symbolize to the satisfaction of Pope and poets and learned men the greatest divisions of human thought. The intellectual scheme of his decoration was given him without doubt, but that scheme he must needs body forth in concrete form and clearly. So much for one set of limitations. Another was that consisting in the material limitation of the room, which was a rectangular space with two unbroken walls, lunette shaped, and lighted from two sides, and two walls pierced by windows. The floor was covered by a tessellated pavement.

Raphael began with the roof, the vaulting; why, we do not know. There were certain obvious advantages of a practical character in such a procedure; once the vaulting was finished, there was no danger of splashing the work upon the lower walls, also the scaffolding could be progressively lowered. These advantages, however, seem of little importance in comparison with the desirability of painting the principal and dominating subjects first, the subsidiary ones afterwards. Sodoma had already covered the vaulting of the Sala with a decorative scheme consisting of four medallions, four rectangles, very small subordinate panels, a central medallion about an escutcheon, and an ornamental framing enclosing all. The frame, or borderings, and the smallest panels, Raphael preserved. The compositions in the four medallions and the rectangles, he caused to be obliterated.

It may be that the new plaster showing in dazzling spots in the midst of the painted frame annoyed the artist so much that he preferred to cover it first of all. This annoyance might, of course, have been obviated by leaving the whole earlier ceiling decoration in place till one of his own great frescoes of the side walls was finished, and became a key-note to the room; but in this case again the presence of another artist's work in so large a mass and close to his own would have been

a disturbing influence as to both scale and color. Raphael was embarked upon a critical enterprise, and one quite new to him; it is probable, therefore, that he would take no risks; at all events, he cleared away the main portion of Sodoma's work and began himself upon that rectangle in the vaulting which he filled with the figure of a girl leaning over a sphere and symbolizing the Creation of the Heavenly Bodies; the three other rectangles, The Judgment of Solomon, The Temptation, and Apollo, followed, and then the four medallions.

Of these beautiful medallions, the Poetry and the Justice are at once the more powerful and the more graceful. They are better drawn and composed than the other two. In the Theology, the face is neither handsome nor well drawn; the shoulders have a cramped look, the drapery over the knees is clumsy. In the Philosophy, the uprights to the throne jar slightly, interfering with the sweeping rotundity of composition found in the other three medallions, and especially in two of them; the disposition of the tablets and the square of the book is also less happy than usual; while in the head, the skull is disproportionately small at the top in relation to the face (it must be admitted that this disproportion holds in some degree in all four of the medallions). The Poetry and the Justice are entirely admirable in composition, and in their filling of space

are superb, while the Theology and Philosophy, when seen as parts of the ceiling, are much finer than if considered in detail. Raphael here seems to have prescribed the composition of the decorative medallion to all time: a central figure with attendant putti or genii; other artists before him had closely approached the motive, but he made it his own, and to-day when in a pendentive a circle with a diameter of six feet or so presents itself, the souvenir of Raphael's women of the Sala della Segnatura is tyrannous.

The rectangles contain admirable figures, — the two women of the Judgment, the figure with the back turned in the Marsyas; the Apollo on the other hand is unbeautiful, rather clumsy, indeed, and there is, as in many places in the ceiling, a certain coarseness of handling, probably resulting from restoration of draperies and portions of the flesh painting, which latter however remains, on the whole, tolerably free from retouching. Nevertheless, the ensemble is superb, and is the ultimate and developed expression of a time-honored arrangement in which four medallions with subsidiary subjects or ornaments fill the vaulting of a rectangular room or chapel.

Raphael now came to his first vast problem, — the painting upon an arch-topped wall of a subject in which the mystical relation of man to his Redeemer

through the Communion, should be discussed in the presence of the Trinity, the Patriarchs, and Apostles, by a company of sainted popes, cardinals and bishops, and by doctors, angelic and seraphic.

First of all, Raphael required a fine arrangement, and he found one which yielded a noble *pattern.* A truly decorative arrangement is one which shall decorously fill and fit a certain circumscribing architectural form; its pattern is therefore of enormous importance, and a good decoration should not only look well as placed, but should be handsome also as a pattern, even if turned upside down so that all sense of drawing in individual figures is lost. In the case of the Disputà, the circumscribing form was a semicircle; within this Raphael has placed the two main ranges of figures; Christ, Mary, and the Baptist, enclosed in a round-topped glory, make up a domical mass re-echoing the general arch of the lunette; the line of patriarchs and apostles curves gently up at the ends, agreeably contradicting the said general arch, while the mass of figures on the earth below bends still more gently downward at left and right, in opposition to the upper line and as a second broader and more delicate echo of the lunette's top, while long marble steps repeat the straight base line of the picture, and make a pedestal to the whole. There are, as it were, two keystones to the composition, — one in the upper group, the

round-topped glory, one in the lower group, the altar; while the curves from the top of the picture to the ends of the upper group, curves which would be a little too long to remain empty, are broken with small groups of flying angels. Exactly in the axis of the picture is a circle enclosing the dove of the Holy Spirit, equidistant between what we have called the two keystones and connecting them.

This, then, is the composition of masses and of main lines in the Disputà, Raphael's first serious essay in monumental decoration, since he never completed the fresco of San Severo. It is immensely individual and Raphaelesque, and yet its genesis is easily found; one has but to go first to the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence to see the Judgment painted there by Fra Bartolommeo, and then to follow the young Raphael in his excursions to those early Christian basilicas of Rome whose apses glittered with saints and symbols. Few things can be more inspiring to the decorator than their grand curves, and we can see that Raphael apprehended the value of mosaic as a ground, since he at once suggested its effect in the medallions of Poetry, and her companions of the vaulting. The composition of the Disputà, for all its formalness, indeed, because of its formalness, is splendidly successful. The figures in the School of Athens are grander and riper, and its architecture adds to its

impressiveness; but as decorative patterns, the Disputà and the Mass of Bolsena remain the two finest works in the Vatican.

The responsiveness of Raphael to the influence of surroundings is nowhere more delightful to witness than in this early part of his Roman sojourn. We can see him growing like a flower, almost from month to month, and can, as it were, walk through the Disputà and School of Athens, noting the gradual expansion of his style. In the thoroughly traditional part of the Disputà, the figures of the enthroned Christ and Mary, he is Perugian, and even poor and feeble in his rendering of the features of the Saviour; his flying angels, on the other hand, have an Umbrian sweetness, but with a graceful power which is all Raphael's own. The cherubs flying around the dove are inspired by Fra Bartolommeo; while the figures of the bishops and saints immediately about the altar, although the work of one who has profited by the example of Leonardo, are already entirely Raphaelesque, and are admirable and immediate precursors of the figures in the School of Athens.

Raphael had justified Bramante by a brilliant success, and this justification must have been not a little important to both painter and architect. Michelangelo, famous already for his Pietà, the equal of which, save at the hands of Donatello, had

not been seen since the Greeks, and which, coming from a man but twenty-eight years old, must have appeared miraculous, was the warm partisan of his Florentine fellow-townsman Giuliano da Sangallo, who was, in turn, the only man whom Bramante could dread as a possible rival in the task, coveted by all Italians, of building St. Peter's.

The Urbinate, strong as he was, had felt the need of strengthening himself still further by acquiring the friendship of other artists, and creating a kind of little court. We are told that almost nightly at his table there met Luca Signorelli, Pietro Perugino, Baldasarre Peruzzi, Giovanantonio Bazzi, and Lorenzo Lotto. What an age! when a single supper party could furnish forth such an assemblage of world-famous artists, who in turn, as they went from their quarters in the Borgo Vecchio, might meet Michelangelo returning from the Vatican with the contingent of Florentines, Bugiardini, Granacci, Aristotile da Sangallo, and l'Indaco, who were helping him in the Sistine Chapel.

Pope Julius was the man for great enterprises, in whatever he undertook, whether in art or war, and the potentialities of the moment were such as might well encourage enthusiam. Imagine an individual to whom came, out of the earth of his own city, such treasure trove as the Belvedere Apollo and the Laocöon; no wonder he determined to house them

well, and planned hopefully to dig in this vineyard that might yield fruit of world's masterpieces. He had long meant to lie some day in the mightiest tomb ever dreamed of by a pontiff, and had set Michelangelo to work, but the work dragged, men told him that the project was unlucky, and at last the mausoleum was abandoned, and the new idea grew in its place, that he, Julius, would build the church of the world. In the old Basilica of St. Peter's, with bell and book and acolytes, he went down into the pit that had been dug, and laid the cornerstone of the new building.

The mausoleum, with its dozens of statues, was to have been erected in the old basilica, now condemned to demolition. Who could tell when the new building would be ready to afford foundations even, for the tomb, to say nothing of adequate shelter? So that matters having come to a standstill, the pope's sculptor was available for other work, and Julius, having renounced a project dear to his heart, cast about for one sufficiently vast to take its place worthily. The man who once had leaped from his mule, and with his own hands had loosed the chains and helped raise the drawbridge to cut off his pursuing enemies, was not one to hesitate in an emergency. He balked at nothing; he had been obliged against his will to cry halt to Michelangelo in the greatest sculptural enterprise

of his time; he would set him instead the greatest pictorial problem. His sculptor should become painter, and should complete the decoration of the central chapel of Christendom, the Sistine.

Every bit of artistic news must have been eagerly discussed at Bramante's table, and even the finding of a Laocoön would pale before such a sensation as this. If Michelangelo succeeded, what enormous prestige would accrue to Sangallo through the success. The possibility was well calculated to set Bramante to thinking, and he thought of Raphael Sanzio, a fellow-townsman of Urbino, whose interests would naturally march with his compatriot's and whose triumphs, if he obtained them, would redound to the glory of himself, Bramante.

There were chances in favor of Raphael; neither artist could pretend to be an accomplished *frescante.* The Urbinate, save at San Severo, had not handled the material since he was Perugino's apprentice, some eight or nine years before. Buonarroti had not used it since he worked with Ghirlandajo in the choir of Santa Maria Novella of Florence; but Raphael was a painter, and already the most promising painter of all who "employed the new manner," and had left the school of Botticelli and Perugino behind them. Michelangelo was not a painter at all, but a sculptor; he might be undone by this new problem, yet who could say that any-

thing was impossible to the man who had drawn those figures of bathers and climbers in the great hall of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio?

Vasari has involved the history of this first rivalry of Raphael and Michelangelo, for rivalry it was, whether generous or bitter, in considerable obscurity. In the life of Buonarroti he says that Bramante urged the pope to have Michelangelo paint the Sistine, because he wished to diminish the glory of the sculptor by giving him unfamiliar work in which he would fail. In the life of Giuliano da Sangallo, the Aretine biographer says exactly the contrary, namely, that Sangallo begged Julius to let his warm friend and partisan Michelangelo paint the vaulting. In choosing between these two statements, we must support the latter by Pietro Roselli's letter of May 10, 1506, to Michelangelo, which says that Bramante was doing all he could to shake the pope's confidence in him as a painter; and we must value this contemporaneous statement more than the words of Vasari, who, though a personal friend of Michelangelo, wrote nearly half a century later, when the sculptor was an old man, and Raphael had been dead for thirty years, and who, into the bargain, contradicted himself diametrically, as we have seen.

Furthermore, it seems preposterous that Bramante, who had strengthened himself by the support of

the painters, should have deliberately tried to throw into the hands of a sculptor, the greatest pictorial opportunity which the age afforded. We are told elsewhere that he tried to obtain the painting of the Sistine vaulting for Raphael; this would be probable. It is added that Michelangelo also favored the young Urbinate; this, though less likely, is not impossible, for the difficulty of the task was quite in proportion to the honor, and Buonarroti, though not a man to be dismayed by the greatness of any task whatsoever, may well have at once dreaded the technical preparation required, and much more the renunciation of his chisel for so long a period. He may have felt that he was to expend time doubtfully, where he might expend it with a certainty of achievement; for "with sublime modesty," he wrote to his father on January 27, 1509, "Because such work is not my profession, I am losing my time uselessly, God help me!" However it all may have been, when Raphael arrived everything was settled, Julius had had his way, Michelangelo had commenced in the Sistine, and Raphael was given the Camera della Segnatura to try his hand on.

The second great fresco of this Camera, the so-called School of Athens, is perhaps the most famous single achievement of the artist, and in it the expansion of his methods is noticeable indeed. We

find no more embossing, no introduction of raised and gilded rays, no modelling of surface in gypsum. Here are no conventional figures such as the Christ of the Disputà, all is freer and larger; these figures are purely Raphaelesque. They are the product of the artist's own personality acted upon at one and the same moment by the influence of Michelangelo in his cartoon of Florence, and the influence of antique masterpieces, seen now for the first time by Raphael in his daily walks. The figures are not perfectly correct examples of draughtsmanship; but they are better, they are noble examples, admirable at once for force and grace, and superbly composed. It may be said that in the Stanza of the Segnatura this fresco marks the point where Raphael has thought most about his individual figures; he has thought enormously, too, about his ensemble and their relations to it, but he has considered his people individually with equal thought. In the Disputà, he apparently sought and experimented even more, but he was less free, because, as yet, less exercised and developed; while in the Parnassus, he was either hurried or less fortunate, and did not show the same sureness of eye or hand in proportion, drawing, and composition.

The composition of the School of Athens, academic through its communicated sense of great preoccupation, is, nevertheless grand, and owes not a

little to Raphael's feeling for space, and the magnificent architectural motive furnished probably by Bramante. In nearly all the frescoes of the various Stanze Raphael has noted the fact that the great circumscribing curve of the lunette's top is an exacting factor in his effect, and has both echoed and contradicted it in such manner as to enhance his pattern of lines and masses; here his echo is found in three great arches receding one behind the other to a point of sight in the middle of the picture; against this point of sight, and framed by the last arch, the figures of Plato and Aristotle stand side by side; from them, to right and left, the figures making up the action drop gently downward in grouped masses to the lower corners. The uprights of the architecture and two colossal statues help to hold up the composition; while the pier-cornices, in severe perspective, yield a sort of thrust and contradiction to the lunette arch. The dignity of this ordering has not been excelled. Large words are not out of place in writing of it, for largeness is its prevailing characteristic, and the result of Raphael's thought and labor was the creation of a monumental fresco which has been more studied, copied, imitated, and described than any other in the history of art.

The Jurisprudence above the windows at one side of the room contains but three figures of women, Prudence, Force, and Moderation, with attendant

putti; there is no architectural motive, unless it be a simple marble bench, and yet, save that the subject did not call for such sustained effort, this fresco is entitled to the praise bestowed upon the School of Athens. In its amplitude, its rhythmic flow, its filling of space, its echoing of circumscribing forms, it is an absolutely perfect decoration. The face of the superb Force is neither correctly drawn nor very handsome; nor can the features of the Moderation be greatly praised; nevertheless, in their general character, the figures may stand for Raphael at his very highest point as decorator.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle, in their invaluable book "The Life and Works of Raphael," say that the Parnassus is not less admirable for distribution and execution than the School of Athens; to us it appears much less excellent than any one of the three other frescoes in the room. The pattern of the whole fresco is pleasing, but the right-hand side of it, from the centre to the lower corner, presents the poorest piece of composition in the entire Camera della Segnatura. The figures seem almost thrown together, if you compare them with the carefully balanced grouping in the School of Athens; for instance, the three muses above and behind Erato are, for Raphael, combined with singularly little grace, and there are serious faults of scale, Urania, the figure with her back turned, being much too big, as

is also Melpomene, whose head is disproportionately large. Several of the muses have less of style than is usually found in Raphael's work, and we again observe unpleasantly large faces and the cramped shoulders upon Melpomene and Urania, which we have seen before in one or two of the vaulting medallions. The exaggerations of fashion are often accountable in part, for unpleasing peculiarities in an artist's work, and in this case the fifteenth century habit of cultivating a high forehead, even of depilating it, and of wearing dresses which appeared to be slipping from the shoulders, may be noted as the exaggerations aforesaid.

Two causes may have helped to make the Parnassus fall behind the other frescoes; first, many portraits of poets, some of them contemporaries, were introduced, and the tendency of the sitter to turn his face towards the spectator was not helpful to the composer of the picture; secondly, the Parnassus seems to have been painted last of all the frescoes in the room, and it is like enough that some emergency occurred, some function was imminent, calling for the clearing away of the scaffolds and the hurried completion of the work. When all reserves are made, the Parnassus contains noble figures and shows plainly that it was produced during Raphael's best period.

In the consideration of the ancient masters, there

is no factor of their work which bewilders one as does the factor of color. It is not too much to say that in the case of many famous oil paintings we do not know what the master's original color intention was at all. Often it has been utterly denaturalized by the restorer, and where that incendiary person has let the work alone, chemical change has sometimes proved almost as harmful as he would have been, but never quite as harmful. Chemical change has done some dreadful things, and a certain blue pigment ran amuck through Italian art, especially in the pictures of Tintoretto and Veronese. But chemical change had its limitations, there was no animus in it, whereas the restorer imposed his own personality (what there was of it) upon that of the work which he attacked. We do not refer to the intelligent modern restorer who only proposes to remove excrescences, but to the earlier Italian restorer, alias over-painter.

Frescoes have been more fortunate in the matter of restoration than oil-paintings or tempera panels, that is to say, have been more neglected; partly because they are big and hard to get at and secondly, because, as fixtures they are less salable than portable pictures, and therefore have been less tempting to those who "improved" damaged works of art for the market. But fresco, too, has its lines of lesser resistance; the surface stucco is baked and cracked

by the sun, damp and frost, and the formation of salts causes it to bloom or to fade, and there is one serious disadvantage inherent in the very first handling of the material itself. Fresco painting, being practically water-color painting upon a thin coating of plaster or stucco, a certain amount of wall surface has to be prepared over night for the artist, who must finish his work while the stucco is still damp, or else must retouch afterwards "*a secco.*" Painting upon it is, therefore, what the French might call *peinture par morceau* on a grand scale. The practitioner has no opportunity of rubbing in his picture, as with an oil-painting, and working it together gradually, he must paint piece by piece, finishing each bit in one painting, if possible. As every artist knows, this rarely *is* possible, so that on nearly every fresco one sees a great number of what the Italians call repentances, *pentimenti*, where the master has made changes and additions by hatching or striping with the end of the brush, — a practice which was more prevalent and apparently more feasible than washing a second tint over the first. Now these *pentimenti* often suffer chemical change, and as Raphael was new to the material, he repented abundantly. There are thereby many places which make spots upon the whole.

Again there is the perishable nature of the surface; the transparent watery medium of fresco

allows the whiteness of the plaster to be felt through the painting, and, keeping the color from falling into heaviness, gives a clear and cheerful look to the work, a look of freshness; but the surface easily becomes dirty, and if any cleaning is attempted, it must be done with great caution. The Camera della Segnatura has suffered from all these accidents common to fresco, yet the general color is warm and pleasing. The flesh, especially in the Scuola, does not seem to have been much restored or overpainted, and in his tonality Raphael still remains Umbrian, so that, save for the Mass of Bolsena, these frescoes are in their coloration the best of the series of the Stanze.

If we would know Raphael intimately as draughtsman, we must see him in his drawings, not his frescoes; we must go to Windsor and Oxford, to the Albertina and the Louvre. There is perhaps a more suave nobility in the accomplished figures of the Jurisprudence and the School of Athens, but for fire and freshness and correctness too, we must turn to those pen-scratched drawings, red chalk studies, charcoal designs, and sepia washes of the Continental and English museums. In the frescoed figures, the outline is sometimes coarse; instead of the delicately felt silhouette of Mantegna, we have a single sweep, and rather uncareful at that, indicating the whole line of a forearm or leg, for instance. This coarse-

ness is often the fault of a restorer, for the restorer is severe with outlines and backgrounds; he loves to emphasize the former, and to "clean up" the latter, thereby still further damaging the silhouette.

There has been so much of this damage by time and repainting that it is difficult to find out just how skilfully Raphael used fresco. To judge from the delicacy of many entire figures in the School of Athens, and especially of certain details, notably the feet, one would say very skilfully indeed, for in accounting the skill of the muralist, we must remember that the fresco painter does no handling, in the sense of loading to obtain texture, and that his work is, after all, a sort of drawing with a brush-point, when once the first washes have been passed over the stucco. Michelangelo, who was thoroughly unaccustomed to the medium, used it with great rapidity and skill upon the Sistine vaulting; and it is probable that Raphael did not fall far behind him, although, be it said here, that he was never a man to lovingly caress a bit of modelling; he delighted in drawing, and used pen, silver point, charcoal, chalk, with equal enthusiasm; what he sought, was not careful expression of surface, or even delicately felt outline, but composition of the figure, movement, and style. There is, for instance, no such careful, skilful, and correct drawing and modelling here as in Andrea del Sarto's fresco The Worship of the

Relics, in the Annunziata portico of Florence, and we are probably gainers by the fact, for Raphael's larger and freer manner suited his subject. It is just because Raphael constantly neglected *correct* drawing, giving his attention rather to style and freedom, that the veriest tyro feels able to criticise him, calls him wooden as to modelling, and, like del Sarto in Browning's poem says, "What an arm and *I* could alter it," but who forgets to continue, like the same Andrea, "Aye, but the play, the insight, and the stretch."

In fact, hardly any artist is so calculated to irritate the student or the dilettante in technique, as Raphael, because he consciously leaves out much that the student tries for especially. The student is taught, first of all, to find the proportions of the particular model who stands before him; next, to draw his outline as correctly as possible, and to model the figure with equal exactness by its lights and shadows; in fact, he is thinking first and last of correctness and the representation of the character of the model to which, if he be skilful enough, he will add cleverness in surface handling and management of his pencil or crayon, management for its own sake, that is. Now Raphael thought only of such handling as would most quickly express his intention; *per se*, he did not care at all for it. He gave his figures conventional pro-

portions, and, as we have said, he constantly subordinated correctness to style; for the character of his model, except in portrait painting, he cared not a pin, unless that character approached his *certo ideale.* Perugino, his master, had not taught him to be either correct or forceful in character; for Perugino was an absolutely conventional draughtsman (creating his convention for himself, however, so that it would perhaps be more correct to call him mannered); rather he had encouraged his pupil to seek grace, charm, fervor. Indeed Raphael can hardly be said to have studied drawing seriously until he went to Florence; there he met the comrades of the realists, of Pollajuolo and Ghirlandajo; but he had not grown up with them, and he never (save in his portraits) drew as closely as Andrea del Sarto, not to mention the subtile Leonardo; he did better than Andrea, but in a different way. Michelangelo was, on the contrary, a draughtsman from the day in which he took the charcoal in hand; his figures are unlike nature indeed, but he is not unsympathetic to the art student, because, in the search for style, Buonarroti's departure from nature is caused by exaggeration of certain qualities dear to the student, while Raphael's comes from a slurring of these qualities. Style does not necessarily include or preclude correctness. Who shall define it? Who shall show us all the graduations that make up the

gamut in which Ingres, correct and elevated, Michelangelo, incorrect and tremendous, Raphael, incorrect and abstractly noble, find their various places.

In 1511 the frescoes of this first Camera were finished; we have, in speaking of them, stated roundly the existence of certain imperfections. The great Raphael has no need of indiscriminate admiration, no need of the praise which in referring to certain Madonnas, full of admirable qualities, has invested them with *all* the qualities, thereby obscuring criticism and offending the sincere art-lover. With his imperfections on his head, he remains one of the greatest artists who ever lived, and perhaps the greatest decorator to all time, so great, at all events, that no man may assign his place.

## III

The Sala della Segnatura was only the first of a series of rooms to be decorated by Raphael; but after its completion, all the rest, save for the brilliant exception of the Miracle of Bolsena was anticlimax. The Heliodorus and the Liberation of Peter were grand and monumental in character; even the academic Incendio is full of interest, but all these were executed by assistants, and the remaining frescoes cannot compare in importance with other decorations of Raphael in Rome, such as the frescoes of the Farnesina, the Loggie, and the Sibyls of Santa Maria della Pace.

The distribution of the room called the Camera d'Eliodoro is as follows: upon the vaulted ceiling are: God appearing to Noah, The Sacrifice of Abraham, Jacob's Dream, and God appearing to Moses in the burning bush. Upon the two walls which are pierced with windows appear: the Miracle of Bolsena and the Liberation of Peter; upon the clear walls are: Heliodorus driven from the Temple, the meeting of Attila and Pope Leo I. Upon the walls below the great frescoes are caryatides, eleven al-

legorical, and four terminal figures, and also eleven little monochrone pictures referring to the industrial prosperity of the States of the Church.

If the Stanza della Segnatura, with its frescoed epitome of the triumph of the Faith and the cultus of Antiquity may be called the Apotheosis of the Renaissance, the Stanza d' Eliodoro, commenced during the lifetime of Julius II., and finished under Leo X., may pass for that of the Papacy. Having celebrated the large and tolerant civilization of the epoch of the Renaissance in the Scuola, the Disputà, the Parnassus, the pope now celebrated the Church, and by easy progression celebrated himself. The Expulsion of Heliodorus allegorizes the military ambition of Julius, Heliodorus standing for the foreign invader of Italy; the Mass of Bolsena again, in glorifying the faith, very naturally shows the pontiff as supreme spectator. Critics have severely condemned this egoism, but it was natural and the sequence was logical. It is true that Julius should have rather celebrated Constantine, or Gregory, but Raphael painted in and for his own epoch, and for all his political blunders Julius was the great pope of the Renaissance.

It is believed that with the exception of the group of women in the lower corner, at the left, Raphael painted the whole of the Mass of Bolsena with his own hand, and it was rarely given

even to him to achieve such a masterpiece. In its treatment it is a marking instance of the quality which was one of Raphael's leading characteristics, perhaps the very first of all his characteristics, his marvellous power of assimilation. He instantly saw, and but a little later translated into his own language of expression, whatever noble or beautiful thing came under his eyes in the work of a predecessor. Here in this Camera of Heliodorus, in the very midst of impressions derived from the antique and from Michelangelo, he turns backward and applies "the grand manner" to the quiet, dignified art of the fifteenth century. In the Mass (or Miracle) of Bolsena, the serious, upturned profiles of Ghirlandajo's people of the Sassetti Chapel, and of Santa Maria Novella, are seen again; white-gowned acolytes of San Gimignano crowd about the ministrant priest, but are sublimated by the art of Raphael into a real apotheosis of the painting of the *quattrocento.*

If there were no architecture around it, the Mass of Bolsena would still be a beautiful picture; but in its accordance with the circumscribing architectural forms, it is especially a magnificent composition. Compositionally again, it affords the finest instance among Raphael's works of the balance of simple and elaborated masses in accordance with the law of filled and vacant spaces, the law whose wise fulfilment does so much to lend dignity, to establish

equilibrium, to stamp even a small work with the monumental character.

The composition builds up superbly; in the centre the square altar-cloth is a sort of keystone, the pope and the ministrant priest kneel at either side, their lines converging upwards; behind them a choir-screen of carved wood curves slightly in contradiction to the arch of the lunette, which latter is echoed by a small archway just above the centre of the screen. To left and right the kneeling acolytes, prelates, and Swiss guards, the woman standing with up-raised arm, the steps at either side of the altar, all lead the composition upwards and towards the centre, while the pillars at the top continue the uprights of the window which is pierced through the wall. Everything in this fresco shows how easy to Raphael was the compositional filling of unusual architectural forms, such as broken lunettes or spandrels; he proved this facility again and again, in the Disputà, the Jurisprudence, the Farnesina, but never more notably than in the Miracle of Bolsena. In addition to all this, among the frescoes of Raphael it is by far the best in color; a Venetian need not have disclaimed its strength and harmony. It has been suggested that Raphael was inspired by the example of Giorgione; we should rather say that the artist had studied the work of Sebastiano del Piombo, although in its

greens and reds the Bolsena somewhat recalls the frescoes of Giorgione's comrade, the young Titian, in the Scuola del Santo at Padua. It may also be noted here that in the Miracle of Bolsena, one feels the color to be wholly due to the executant, and not, as is the case in Pinturicchio's Borgia rooms, or Lippo's work at Spoleto, to a running together of colors and a toning of gold and ultramarine by time.

In the expulsion of Heliodorus, the color has, on the contrary, little harmony and the execution of the work is accredited to assistants. This fresco shows at once Giulio Romano's bricky-reds and the bright colors of Giovanni da Udine ; the chemically disintegrated color of portions of the work is disagreeable, the outlines are coarse, the limbs heavy, but the fresco is grand, in spite of it all, with the spirit of Raphael and of the best years of the sixteenth century. Although the execution is pupils' work, Raphael's Giulio of Rome is a very different man from Gonzaga's Giulio of Mantua. The face of one of the avenging angels is fine, in spite of a conventionalizing of thick, curved lips, a certain lumpishness of the pseudo-Grecian nose, and upon the scowling forehead of his horseman, a foreshadowing of the grimace which Giulio afterwards constantly reproduced in his Palazzo del T. There is a splendid rush to the figures with the scourges,

and the composition massed upon the two sides of the lunette about an open centre, and carried to the top by heavy architectural forms, is very fine, if academic, but does not equal that of the Bolsena.

It has been noted that in comparison with the Sala della Segnatura we find in the Camera of Heliodorus an unfortunate narrowing of subject. This is, however, not half so important or half so unfortunate as the *expansion of methods* shown here, which resulted in the confiding of a great part of the work upon the walls to pupils. But this expansion, like the narrowing, was inevitable. Every one wanted Raphael's work, the Pope, Chigi, Conti, Bembo, Bibbiena, Goritz. No man could say no to the pope, even the stubborn Michelangelo yielded when Julius threatened to throw him from the scaffold; least of all could Raphael say no to any one. His was not a weak character, but the very nature which made him seize upon the pictorial qualities of other men's work, impelled him to adopt with equal eagerness the pictorial suggestions of his friends. He instantly apprehended their thought, developed it, and could not help wishing to materialize it. For such materialization, time could not suffice, unless Raphael had a score of hands. He soon had them — two of his frescoes in the Camera of Heliodorus and the Madonna of Foligno are said to have been painted within fourteen months! The

result of this was that while the distribution of the second Stanza was admirable, the composition in the main magnificent, the execution was utterly unequal, and the room remains inferior to the Sala della Segnatura. This inferiority is undeniable, and yet it is equally certain that the Bolsena, the Liberation, and the Heliodorus have a breadth of feeling which shows that the Raphael who is behind them is a riper and maturer man than even the painter of the Segnatura frescoes, but, alas, he is *behind* them, hidden or at any rate veiled and blurred by the personality of his pupils.

This interposition of the pupil between the master and his work we shall discuss more fully at the end of this paper; it is an obscuring element in the study of Raphael, and one which can never be completely dealt with, since no analysis can determine just where the handiwork of the master joins that of his assistant. We must not be too ready to accuse Raphael of a want of artistic integrity, for artistic integrity does not consist in the master's doing every whit of the work himself, but in his attaining the very highest and best result of his combined temperament and skill, so that the question in this case became, which would be better, one room painted entirely by Raphael, or the decoration of five rooms inspired by him and carried out by assistants working with and under him.

We know how Raphael answered this question, and in view of his temperament we may be sure that he answered it according to his best belief and without being influenced by mercenary considerations. His easel pictures alone would have provided comfort, even luxury, for him, but he burned to create, to compose, to synthetize, and the natural end of all this was the audacious and sublime project of measuring, studying, and restoring the whole of ancient Rome.

Where the exact point may have been at which Raphael could have begun to make use of his assistants with perfect wisdom and advantage to the sum total of his work, we shall never know, but it is certain that he accepted commissions for more than he could possibly perform, and that his use of other men's skill was phenomenal in its extent. The artist to-day winces at the idea of confiding a whole great fresco to pupils, and shudders at the statement made by writers upon Raphael, that when he took the Sala del Eliodoro in hand, he began to furnish only scratch-sketches, rough suggestions of movement and composition, and then permitted his pupils to completely execute the finished sketches from which all the working drawings were made. Such a method, if rigorously carried out, would have almost eliminated the master's personality in everything except composition, and

although the frescoes of the Loggie and certain others look as though this mode of preparation may have been applied to them, it is difficult not to feel that in most cases the artist kept close to the pupil and at one time or another put a great deal of Raphael into the sketches.

As for the amount of work produced, which, save for Raphael as inspiration, could never have come into the world, it was simply prodigious; between the frescoes of the Segnatura and the Heliodorus hall, came the portrait of Julius, many Madonnas, del Popolo, di Casa Alba, the Garvagh, the Virgin of the Diadem, and others. The Foligno altar-piece was contemporaneous with the second Stanza; then we hear of more *Madonne*, del Divino Amore, dell' Impannata, the portrait of Bindo Altoviti, and the Isaiah. Add to all this, the study of antiquities that was busily carried on, the exchange of social courtesies between the artist and his many and powerful friends, and one can easily realize that the pace was a killing one. It was soon to be accelerated by a new impulse, that of fulfilling the duties of architect in chief of St. Peter's. We may also remember, as a complicating circumstance, that as early as when Raphael was finishing the Segnatura frescoes he was in love, either with a lady or with the art of sonneteering, an art in which his great rival Michelangelo, excelled, and

which was practised by many wits and learned men of the papal court. Crowe and Cavalcaselle note the quaintness of the contrast between the unerring sureness that controlled the painting, and the uncertainty which prompted the scrawling of whole lines of alternative rhymes, solo, nolo, dolo, rei, dei, lei, upon the sides of his sketches and studies.

On February 13, 1513, Julius II. died, and in the next fresco of the Heliodorus hall, we have a Medici instead of a Rovere. Cardinal Giovanni, son of the Magnificent Lorenzo, and who sat for his portrait in the fresco of the Decretals of the Segnatura, now advances as proxy for Saint Leo, and as actual Pope Leo X., to meet Attila at the gates of Rome; indeed, he appears also in double and as cardinal, riding behind the pope, having been so painted while Julius was still alive. In this fresco, the Attila, architechtonic composition has been frankly abandoned; it is simply a picture in a lunette; some of the figures are fine, others merely declamatory, while certain of the horses are not only theatrical, but absurd.

The fourth fresco of the room, Lo Scarcerazione, the Liberation of St. Peter, is dated 1514. As in most of the Vatican subjects of Raphael, it contains a political allusion, probably to the Battle of Ravenna and the escape of Pope Leo (then a cardinal) from the French.

It must be admitted that in this work Raphael somewhat departs from the principles of mural decoration; first, he divides his composition into three distinct incidents; secondly, in painter's parlance, he breaks a hole through the wall with his violent opposition of lights and shadows. But the work is monumentally composed as to its distribution of masses, and is a *chef d'œuvre*, and the temptation to produce it which overpowered Raphael was here again the probable result of his intensely assimilative nature. Piero della Francesca had frescoed this room before him. Now Piero's vision of Constantine in San Francesco at Arezzo affords the first instance of a *tour de force* of chiaroscuro; it is not unlikely that della Francesca had here repeated some such effect, and that Raphael could not resist the opportunity "to better his instruction." As it is, the treatment of chiaroscuro upon so monumental a scale was a daring and successful novelty.

The Stanza which comes fourth as to date is usually called the Stanza dell' Incendio, and only the fresco which gives its name to the room holds the interest long; here Raphael frankly turns over the work to his assistants, and is felt only as an inspiration and in the painting of certain rare fragments. As a result, three of the frescoes present little of the interest to be found in the Camera della Segnatura, and the fourth, the best of the series, the

Incendio del Borgo, is melodramatic rather than dramatic, and is a coarse and exaggerated development of the fine drawings in Vienna, — drawings which themselves are not exempt from an academic and theatrical character. Here begin the attitudinizing, the rolling of eyes, the grimace of widely opened mouths, of over-emphatic gesture, and all the delineation of a "fine frenzy." The epoch of exaggeration had set in and controversy was not slow to follow. Many of the courtiers admired these later frescoes enthusiastically, the more so for the many portraits of prelates that were conveniently introduced. But we hear from the opposition in the letter of the saddler Leonardo to Michelangelo; speaking of the Farnesina frescoes, he says, "They are even worse than those of the last Camera" (of the Incendio del Borgo). The figures attitudinize; all this would-be emotion leaves us indifferent, but nevertheless under and behind the exaggeration and the coldness is still the superb power of the Renaissance; we are yet close to the life-giving force of Raphael.

The fresco of the Battle of Ostia, which was executed in 1514–15, was not painted by Raphael himself, with the exception perhaps of the portraits of the pope and of his attendants, Cardinals Giulio de'-Medici and Bibbiena. The work is full of varied action, but which is distinctly theatrical, while the

figures are very inferior to the drawings made as studies for them, and now in the Museum of Oxford. One of these studies for the Battle of Ostia is a drawing in red chalk now in Vienna. This drawing is said to have been sent to Dürer in 1515, but the inscription upon it, stating that Raphael sent it as a specimen of his handiwork is now pronounced apocryphal. Morelli asserts that it, as well as the studies for the Incendio del Borgo, the water-carrier, the young man bearing his father, etc., which are in the same Museum of Vienna, are all by Giulio Romano. He believes that at this epoch Raphael usually made only a slight preliminary sketch, which was turned into a finished study by his pupils, and then enlarged into cartoons, which latter, after having been corrected somewhat by Raphael, were approved, and then carried to completion by assistants.

In ending the notes upon the Stanze of Raphael one may again remark the coarseness of outline which is to be found even in some of the finest figures; instead of the many subtile little planes which make up the silhouette of an arm or leg, two or three sweeping touches will outline a calf or forearm; in many of the faces the features are generalized till they seem only a Renaissance reminiscence of an antique statue. This is partly because pupils imperfectly translated Raphael's

sketches, partly because restorers have coarsened the modelling, hardened and thickened the outlines. Take them for all in all, the figures of the Stanze will not stand as pieces of subtile drawing or characterization, but they are masterpieces of style and of movement, and are intended to tell at a distance and as parts of a whole. To see how they gain when allowed to fulfil their true purpose, we have only to compare the large isochromatic photographs of figures in detail with the same figures when seen in those photographs that show the *ensemble* of the fresco to which the said figures belong; seen in this *ensemble* every line becomes a part of the main scheme.

## IV

Raphael had now but four or five years of life left to him, but even if we leave all easel pictures out of the question, and account him as decorator only, we find that alternating scripture-history and mythology, he in this short time painted, or, at any rate, inspired and caused to be painted, three great cycles of works, the Loggie of the Vatican, the tapestry cartoons, the frescoes of the Farnesina, besides the single frescoes, the Galatea, the Sibyls of Santa Maria della Pace, and the mosaics of the Chigi Chapel.

The Loggie of the Vatican (painted 1517–19) consist of thirteen arcades vaulted *in cupola*. Each of the arcades contains four subjects; there are consequently fifty-two in all, nearly forty of which were inspired by Raphael. The *grotteschi*, which surround the subjects, are what especially strike the visitor to the Loggie. The general effect is cheerful, even gay, astonishingly varied in motive, and quintessentially characteristic of the Renaissance. No decoration gives a stronger impression of the spontaneity, freshness, fecundity, and endless resources of the epoch. The inspiration for

the ornamental portions of these frescoes came from subterranean Rome, from the wall paintings of antiquity, and the Loggie in their turn have been a quarry for the decorators of four hundred years. It is in the purely decorative parts, the so-called grotesques (*grottesche* from the *grotte*, grottoes or excavations, in which the original mural paintings were found), in the interwoven figures and scrolls, that we find special subject for admiration.

As for the sacred subjects painted in the rectangles of the lunettes, they were probably hastily and badly executed in the beginning, were exposed to the open air, have been battered almost to pieces, and so restored that they suggest the staring fireboards of the beginning of our century; an arm or a leg seems the result of a single brush-sweep; the beard or hair of a patriarch is often a patch of white slapped on and set awry at that, like a wig. Such figures as the Eve in the Creation, and in the Expulsion from Paradise, are horrible little monstrosities, incredible in proportions and outlines. Such can be accounted for only by supposing that at one time or another common house-painters, set to repair damage, have daubed over entire figures. These portions of the Loggie mark the lowest level to which anything proceeding originally from Raphael's inspiration fell, the worst parts of the Farnesina frescoes are delicate in comparison. And yet in

spite of their astonishing coarseness of execution and line, some of these figures are grand in line as well, and some of the subjects have a simplicity, beauty, and freshness of composition which give evidence of the best side of Raphael's capacity, even though the artist never touched them himself and took part in them only as an inspiration.

If he had given his pupils such careful studies to carry out as the chalk drawings, let us say, which he made in the early days of his Segnatura work, for his Massacre of the Innocents, we should probably have had grand results in the cases of not a few of the Loggie subjects, — notably the creation of Sun and Moon, the Burning Bush, Abraham and the Angels, the Flight of Lot, God appearing to Isaac, and indeed many others.

Some of the critics who have most carefully studied the Loggie will not admit that a single stroke by Raphael himself remains to prove that he ever furnished even first rough scratch-sketches, for the subjects; and they believe that the thirty or more drawings, still existing in various collections were either made by pupils, at his suggestion, for the subjects, or else are posterior to the latter, and are memorandum-copies.

Be all this as it may, at least a dozen subjects show that Raphael directly controlled Giulio in his conception of their composition and movement.

If there has been much loss in such procedure, there has been also some gain, for perhaps nothing in Raphael's career more triumphantly proves the force of spirit, than does this wonder of the man's inspiration, here and especially in the cycle of the Farnesina, breaking through the clumsy envelope cast over it by inferiority of workmanship, by haste and lack of care and the ravage of time. No matter if Giulio painted the goddesses of the Farnesina brick-red, and if the bowered frame-work of Giovanni da Udine has been turned by dampness and Carlo Maratta's restorations to a blotched and coarse green. They are goddesses for all that, grand and free; they could have come only in the full *cinquecento* and from Raphael Sanzio. If Galatea be battered and coarsened in outline, if the color be brutally altered, the artist has, nevertheless, translated the classics more truly than could the most learned humanist. Here the *cinquecento* love of antiquity finds its truest expression, and this painter of Madonnas and saints feels the old Greek joy of life, so that the dry wall, for all its chalky color, shows to us the sea with its salt strength, the freedom of brown, bare limbs, the clouds and the breeze, and white foam on blue water. Indeed, even in the coarse handling of the Loggie and Farnesina frescoes, one sympathizes with a sort of fearlessness akin to that with which the decorators

of Pompeii attacked their walls, working debonairly and not giving themselves much pains, but building upon the foundation of a great tradition.

The Farnesina is something of a shock at first; one looks up at the lunettes and comments, "What house-painters' pots of color, and no time taken to mix or temper anything afterwards!" and then one stares at the still more coarsely executed rectangles of the ceiling, with an ever-growing wonder that the great Raphael, no matter how hurried, could have had the Sistine Madonna and the portrait of Leo X. in his studio, and in his outstanding performance could have tolerated such slurred work as was being given to Chigi's pavilion. It is preposterous, and one can almost fancy such a light-hearted impresario, going into the Farnesina for five minutes on the eve of that excursion which he made with Castiglione and Bembo and Navagero to Tivoli, and saying, "Giulio mio, I'm going into the mountains with some friends for to-morrow's Sunday holiday; put me up a Psyche received in Olympus in that rectangle; you have my sketches for it, see that you have the twelve gods on the ceiling by Monday morning. I shall be back, and will come in and tell you if there's anything more to be done to them." The prodigious amount of work executed during the three last years of Raphael's life suggest almost such a burlesque summariness of

planning and fulfilment; and yet, and yet! Who would exchange the result in the Farnesina for any other modern artist's rendering of Greek myth or antique life.

Raphael's "antiquity" is absolutely *sui generis;* it is not Greek, it is Raphael; but he felt and expressed more nearly than has any modern man that joyous freedom which we like to think existed when the world was young. He had never seen Pompeii; but, buried as it was, he divined it through the little Roman houses of the Palatine and the Tiber, and his pupils placed upon the walls of the Borgia apartments, those Hours which are indeed irrevocable now, but which even in the meanest prints that perpetuate them seem echoes from the work of some Greek wall painter.

No other had divined all this until Raphael came; painters had been in love with antiquity for an hundred years, and thought themselves classical in their style. Botticelli created bewitching masquerades intensely personal to himself and to no other, Greek or Tuscan; Ghirlandajo and Filippino, dragged armor and standards out of the humanistic property-room, and manufactured so many Florentine "supers" at rehearsal. Mantegna really put on the sandals and wore them worthily, but moved only to stateliest cadences, with chin held high and frowning brow.

Raphael, the mighty brain-picker, himself the mightily endowed of mind, looked upon the wall-paintings of the *scavi*, and made them his own. He seemed to see as the ancients did, not as those who modelled a Farnese torso, but as if some craftsman throwing upon the walls of Baiæ or Capua, joyous stories from the Greek myths, gayly, almost carelessly but with a whole world of tradition behind him, had suddenly been gifted with an all-compelling genius.

What other man could have had such visions as gave us Galatea, or the grand women in the best of the Farnesina frescoes, or the spirits who toss their arms above the Zodiacal signs in the mosaics of Santa Maria del Popolo. And while he was seeing the visions, he came down to earth now and again to pore over the Vitruvius which Fabio Calvo was translating for him; to measure the ancient monuments of the city; to paint many portraits, of the pope, Castiglione, Bembo, Bibbiena, Navagero, Beazzano, and to furnish material to Marco Antonio for his engravings. We may add the Madonna of San Sisto to the visions, and may note that in addition to painting many other easel pictures, the Saint Cecilia, the Holy Family of Francis I., the Saint Michael, the Madonna of the Chair, he incidently built two or three palaces, and diligently attended to the strengthening of the piers of

Saint Peter's; it is enough to make the head swim.

After the popes, no one was so responsible for Raphael's unremitting labor as Agostino Chigi, who, to the commission for the Farnesina frescoes, added those for the Sibyls in Santa Maria della Pace, and for the mosaics in his family chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo. In the latter, Raphael apparently proposed to execute a grand cycle, commencing with the creation of the stars by the Eternal Father, a subject which as a medallion should close the centre of the vaulting; this, as well as eight panels representing the creation of the planets, was executed in mosaic by Aloisio della Pace, a Venetian [1516–24]. Here the work stopped, whereas Raphael, had he lived, would probably have completed an entire and grand system of decoration by the addition of the principal episodes from Genesis and from the history of the Redemption. In the mosaics which were executed, Raphael, inspired by the Convito of Dante, in which angels move the different planets, has given to each one of the constellations of the zodiac a celestial messenger as a governing presence, and has placed Jehovah above them all. At this epoch of the sixteenth century few of the rules obtained which controlled mosaic at an earlier time. We, therefore, find here a treatment wholly differing from that seen, for instance,

at Ravenna; it is a Renaissance treatment which, in spite of its advanced technique, as to design and modelling is inferior in true decorative principle to the work of the early Christian centuries; but for all their hardness of modelling and color, some of these mosaics are very beautiful and thoroughly Raphaelesque in character.

In the Sibyls, on the contrary, Vasari will have it, that Raphael was "greatly assisted by having seen the work of Michelangelo in the Chapel of the Pope." "He has walked through my chapel," said Buonarroti, if we may believe the story, and truly he had; but just as Raphael could not help borrowing from each beautiful thing that he saw, so also he could not help changing what he borrowed until he made it his own, and if the Sibyls of the Pace are cousins to the women of the Sistina, they are sisters to those in the Jurisprudence of the Segnatura. Whenever Raphael and Michelangelo came into contact with each other, some legend has grown up. Cinelli, in his *Bellezze di Firenze,* tells us that the former had received five hundred ducats on account for his Sibyls; on his asking for the remainder due him, Chigi's cashier refused to pay more, and demanded that the matter should be referred to an expert. Michelangelo was chosen, and going to Santa Maria della Pace, affirmed that each head was of itself worth one hundred

ducats. Chigi, having been informed of the fact, immediately ordered his cashier to pay four hundred ducats more, and said, "Be courteous with Raphael, and satisfy him well, for if he makes us pay for the draperies too, we shall be ruined."

About five years before he died, came the coveted opportunity to take part in the decoration of the Sistine chapel. The pope commissioned him to design a series of tapestries to cover the lower walls, and this valiant artist, who was such a decorator, such a realist when he chose to paint a pitilessly exact portrait of an Inghirami, now showed that he could illustrate text as forcibly and directly as the great dramaturgist Giotto.

The people of the Renaissance had never heard of art for art's sake; as for us, it is probable that in the bottom of our hearts we all have a good healthy love of illustration of text, just as we have of hearing a good story well told; and for us one of the quite wonderful sides of Raphael is that which he shows in telling his Bible stories with such force and directness that a child can understand them, so that once he has seen Ananias and Sapphira in the tapestry cartoon, no other presentation of the same scene ever quite takes its place. Here again we have excellence in spite of grave defects of mannerism; the tapestries belong to the epoch of the attitudinizing Incendio. These groups of apostles look

as if an electric shock had caused every one's hair to stand on end, and spread wide all the fingers and toes in the picture; but what admirable composition, and what clarity! These are the stories of the New Testament as understood by *us*. To Europeans and their descendants, the Orientals of Tissot and Bida, as actors in scripture drama, are unfamiliar; Aryans of our own race have supplied Aryan actors, from the mason's prentice playing in the cathedral mysteries, down to Robbia's Maries and Buonarroti's prophets, and from them again to villagers of Oberammergau. In the long line no *dramatis personæ* are more familiar than those of the cartoons furnished to Pope Leo and it is not too much to say that before the days of King James, the Bible was translated for English-speaking people by Raphael Sanzio.

By 1520, Raphael had crowded into thirty-seven years the achievement of a century. He died on his birthday, Good Friday, the sixth of March at the very moment of the culmination that he had so mightily helped to bring about. Almost at his elbow in the Sistine chapel Michelangelo had completed the greatest pictorial creation that has been given to the world; in Venice, Titian was at the height of his career and in Parma, Correggio was about to paint the decorations of the Cupola.

## V

The study of the works of Raphael is necessarily the study of the evolution of the pictorial art of Central Italy. For two hundred years great painters had been working at problems of suggestion, expression, and technical achievement. Giotto had taught art to be real and dramatic, grand and simple at once; the naturalists had learned to paint man; their greater contemporaries to express him in his essential attributes; Masaccio had made man's body a solid realization in an ambient environment; Botticelli had used that body as a sort of pattern for lovely decorative composition of lines; Ghirlandajo had found in it a pretext for dignified portraiture; Signorelli had made it material for the expression of movement by muscular construction, and Perugino had pierced its envelope for the pietistic ecstasy beneath. Each of these men, with more or less width of purpose and scope of realization, had cultivated his own vantage-point till the art fields of Italy were indeed those of the *Blüthe Zeit.*

Then came Raphael, the grand harvester, and bound up the sheaves of the Renaissance. But he

did not collect and bind only, he sifted, he rejected, and he added, added mightily. The age had wreaked itself upon experiment; experiment in expression, anatomy, perspective, composition, and decorative detail. Raphael judged all this experiment, and taking the various results examined and almost instinctively selected from each what was best suited to the needs of pictorial presentation, what was best worth saving, perpetuating, and sublimating. Having done all this, he synthetized his material, and in presenting it, added so much of his own, that the result of his alembication more than justified his eclecticism.

We have considered him only as decorator; but for three hundred years after his death he was famous less by his mural paintings than by his transportable pictures which carried his name to tens of thousands who lived beyond the Alps, and by the engraved reproductions of his tapestry cartoons which told Bible stories to Europe, Protestant and Catholic alike. Most of all, he held his public by his treatment of the subject which through its universal humanity was the touchstone of every artist's power to appeal to the heart, the Mother and Child. Not the Queen of Heaven of the fourteenth century, not even the Mary of the fifteenth century, human and sympathetic, but made more or less official by the throne and the paraphernalia of

ceremonial worship, not these, but just a mother with a baby, was enough for the early *cinquecento* artists, and among them all none was simpler in his treatment of costume, none rejected accessory more readily than Raphael. To the people of his own time, the people at large, that is to say, not the dilettanti, he undoubtedly appealed most by the sweetness of his Maries, and especially by his power of creating a more beautiful and more human type of Christ-child than any which had yet been seen. The amateurs of his day, and the critics of our own time, have in their turn not undervalued this marvellous capacity which made him dear to the people, — the capacity, that is, for drawing figures of infants, graceful, powerful, and expressive beyond any preceding creations of brush or painting save those of Leonardo. But to these more enlightened critics, Raphael has been perhaps yet more wonderful by reason of the endless, tireless invention, which, with but three figures for its material, rang all the compositional changes that were possible without straining for effect, upon so simple a subject as that of a mother and two children.

This subject of the Holy Family, beginning with such simple pictures as the Solly Madonna, and expanding into vast altar-pieces like the Foligno, has been with a certain public, and that a large one, the most popular in the entire range of Raphael's works,

and the admiration given it at times has been, if not too lavish, certainly too indiscriminate.

Later criticism, in attempting to put an end to this undiscerning praise, has gone too far on the other side; for if three centuries called Raphael divine, many a student of the Romantic epoch, and especially of our own days, when surface-handling is so highly esteemed, has dismissed his work contemptuously, as *pompier*, painty and wooden. Some of it is all of these three things, but none of it is worthy of contempt, for the least of his works shows, in some degree, either his compositional force or his superiority over his contemporaries in certain directions. He is *pompier* in his tapestry cartoons, his Transfiguration, and often elsewhere he is rather wooden, as in the Belle Jardinière and some of her sisters. He is painty too, which last word means that, in places, the flesh, and especially the drapery, suggest paint on wood rather than the substances which they are intended to represent. But if some of his compositions seem to us academic, through the sense of preoccupation conveyed, we must not forget that much of what appears to us conventionality, comes from the fact that these compositions were so well found, so admirably ponderated, that imitators have stolen the thought without submitting to the preoccupation, and through their own weakness have made the originals seem conventional.

As to surface-handling, if we accord it the meaning that it usually conveys to-day, that of clever manipulation of pigment, we must remember that practically it did not exist for Raphael's contemporaries.

Fresco was the medium used by Tuscans during centuries of wall decoration, and fresco being water-color, no loading for the sake of effect could be obtained, nor could tricks of handling be perceived at all in works placed at so great a distance from the eye as were most mural decorations. It was therefore not in the traditions of Tuscan art that any painter should attempt handling, or any public demand it, so that rendering of surface with Raphael's immediate predecessors had been performed only in the most primitive manner, as in the embossing of pattern upon draperies. If, then, many lovers of technique have found Raphael unsympathetic on account of his lack of surface-handling, they must admit, after a fair examination, that he not only followed the example of his contemporaries, but that in at least one picture, the portrait of Leo X., he went further than they did in the attempt to render texture, of the silk brocade, for instance, the gilded bell, and the tablecloth.

The fact that skilful manipulation of pigment in surface-handling did not obtain until after Raphael's time, does not however excuse a relative indifference to handling which makes his modelling sometimes

appear unconsidered, if we compare it with the close and subtile treatment of some of his contemporaries; for instance, with the treatment of the profile heads of monks by Perugino in the Florentine Academy, or the heads of Ghirlandajo's shepherds in the same gallery. Many late fifteenth century works have a closeness of modelling which is almost Flemish; Raphael's is not like this, and his modelling is at the point of evolution where it ceased to have the delicate, if rather dry, closeness of certain primitive Tuscan masters, without approaching the breadth of Titian's later manner, or giving even the slightest hint of the robust, square touches which came in the seventeenth century with Velasquez and Hals. Every artist eventually makes his effect with what he cares for most, and modelling *per se*, whether close or broad, was not what Raphael liked best or next to best. So it was with his color; the evolution of his art-work shows that he did not hold color as dearly as an Umbrian and a pupil of Perugino might have been expected to. Had he cared to keep his mind to it, he could have always been an agreeable colorist, but probably never an individually great one.

Raphael began as an Umbrian, and with the true Umbrian coloration, which is agreeable with a certain yellow warmth that in the best examples becomes even rich, but which is serene and quiet, and never

reaches the strongly individual, as with Tintoretto at his best; the deeply solemn, as with Titian and Giorgione, or the freshly opalescent, as with Veronese and Tiepolo. Some of Raphael's Madonnas have this golden Umbrian coloration; others have been cleaned till they are crude, or overpainted till they are heavy or even dirty. Nor is it always the fault of the restorer.

In his later days, when great commissions crowded upon him, when envoys from kings and dukes stood at his elbow, urging him more and more to satisfy their masters, it would seem as if Raphael grew to care less for color and to slur it. Now and then, he had notable changes of heart, as in the Leo X. and the Miracle of Bolsena. In the portrait of Leo, we find an intellectual scheme of color, a scale of reds unusual both for the painter as individual and for his epoch of art in Tuscany, and which is far more considered than is the color scheme of almost any other among his works. In the Bolsena, we see Raphael again as assimilator; having profited by the experiments made by other men in the direction of character, composition, movement, he now, after seeing and admiring the color of the Venetians in the work of Sebastiano del Piombo, reproduces it with surprising success. It is admirably comprehended; but it is not quite Venetian; all the more that it is based upon the work of a man who was himself soon

affected by the Roman school. It is strong and glowing, but he falls short of Titian, for if the fresco-work of Titian in Padua be coarse in handling, it is not so in color, while there is a touch of color-coarseness in the Bolsena. This coarseness runs also to a sort of dry, bright commonplaceness in the drapery of the Madonna della Seggiola. Nevertheless, Raphael would have done well to have remained Umbrian, or imitated his Venetian fellow, rather than to have pushed Leonardo's *sfumatura* in color as far as he did.

But we have seen that Raphael experimented and selected incessantly, and kept what he thought was most useful to his presentation; towards the end of his days he sought not nearly so much for color as for dramatic relief; therefore, he clung to the black shadows of Leonardo and Bartolommeo, — shadows which have blackened still more by the effect of time, and which became more disagreeable with Raphael than with da Vinci, because his modelling was much harder than the latter's. In short, Raphael was able to acquit himself admirably in color, but generally preferred to give the time and thought to something else; was agreeable in many works, admirable in the Leo and the Bolsena, and, at the end of his life, sacrificed color to other qualities in his Transfiguration.

As composer, Raphael was absolute monarch, and

ruled as he pleased; taking other men's compositions, if he chose, bettering them, and founding upon them, or inventing new ones of his own, without the slightest suggestion of straining; indeed, he banished all sense of strain from his composition as completely as he eschewed the ugly or painful in his choice of subject. His figures in some of his later works might gesticulate and roll their eyes; but they are easily composed, and, as was fitting in one who overlooked and judged, he brought to art a quality which led all his other ones, — the quality of high serenity.

After his drawings, and in almost equal degree, it is Raphael's composition which brings us nearest to him as an artist, closest to his real intention. In other ways, the pupil-assistant is constantly interposed between the master and ourselves, but collaboration, which may blunt outline and make color heavy, is almost powerless to distort composition. Through the art of composition the painter takes his spectator directly by the hand; by concentration he focuses the eye of that spectator upon the point in his picture which is most important; then, by the ordering of the lines, and lights, and shadows, he leads him, as he wishes, from point to point, and gifts him with a sense of well-being, born of the wise distribution of the masses, the chiaroscuro, and the lines. This itinerary is involuntary to the spectator,

but is, therefore, all the more delightful, and of this art of composition Raphael was the greatest master of the modern world.

The comparison of Raphael with Michelangelo is inevitable, but not very profitable; each sat upon the mountain-top, one in clouds, the other in sunshine; for Buonarotti's *terribilità* we have Raphael's serenity; in either quality there is power. Michelangelo's was the most overwhelming personality in the history of modern art, and a whole generation struggled in its shadow, and could not escape its fascination. Raphael used the personalities of all the greatest artists of his time, and made some of their best his own. His working life was only a little more than a quarter as long as the span of nearly seventy years of labor allotted to his great rival, Michelangelo. Raphael is the typically youthful artist, and therein is forever the very archetype of the Renaissance, of the New Birth, of the epoch when the world was young again, and men turned east and west, upward and onward; to the arts with Leonardo, to the seas with Columbus, to the heavens with Copernicus, in dauntless conviction that their question, if earnestly asked, should assuredly find an answer somewhere in the great economy of nature.

# FLORENTINE SKETCHES

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## I

The traveller who, turning his back to the gates of Ghiberti, passes, for the first time, under the glittering new mosaics and through the main doors of Santa Maria del Fiore experiences a sensation. He leaves behind him the façade, dazzling in its patterns of black and white marble, all laced with sculpture, he enters to dim, bare vastness, — surely, never was bleaker lining to a splendid exterior. Across a floor that seems unending, he makes long journeys, from monument to monument; to gigantic *condottieri*, riding ghostlike in the semi-darkness against the upper walls; to Luca's saints and angels in the sacristies; to Donatello's Saint John, grand and tranquil in his niche, and to Michelangelo's group, grand and troubled in its rough-hewn marble.

At length, in the north transept, he comes to a small door, and entering there, he may, if legs and wind hold out, climb five hundred and fifteen steps to the top of the mightiest dome in the world, the widest in span, and the highest from spring to sum-

mit. For the first one hundred and fifty steps or so, there are square turnings, and the stone looks sharp, and new, and solid; a space vaulted by a domical roof follows, and is apparently above one of the apsidal domes to the church; then a narrow spiral staircase leads to where a second door opens upon a very narrow, balustraded walk that runs around the inner side of the dome.

He is at an altitude of sixty-seven metres, exactly at the spring of the cupola and the beginning of the Vasari frescoes; the feet are at an elevation of one metre less than is that of the tower tops of Notre Dame de Paris, and yet the Dome hollows away overhead, huge enough, high enough to contain a second church piled, Pelion-like upon the first. Before, in the dimness, is the vastest roof-covered void in the world; it is terrific, and if the visitor be susceptible, his knees shake, and his diaphragm seems to sink to meet them.

The impression is tremendous; no wonder that the Tuscans felt Brunelleschi to be the central figure of the Renaissance. Again and again, whether in the gallery or between the walls of the dome, the thought comes: men built this, and one man dared it and planned it. Not even the Pyramids impress more strongly; for if Brunelleschi built a lesser pyramid, he hollowed his and hung it in the air.

On the other side of the space, a small black spot

becomes a door when the traveller has giddily circled half the dome; it opens upon another staircase, up which he climbs between the two skins of the cupola, or rather between two of the three, like a parasite upon a monster. Sometimes the place suggests a ship, with the oculi as gunports, piercing to the outer day, or else, his mind fresh from that red *inferno* of Vasari's frescoes, the traveller is tunnelling up through a volcano crater with a whole Typhonic, Enceladus-buried world below. To right and left, the smoothed, cemented surface curves away and upward, brick buttresses appear constantly, but always with the courses of brick laid slanting to the earth's level, and perpendicular to the thrust of the dome. Every possible effect of light and obscurity makes the strange vistas yet more weird, and, now and then, there is a feeling of standing upon the vast, rounding slope of some planet that shines at one's feet, then gradually falls away into the surrounding blackness.

The famous "oaken chain" of Vasari's life of Brunelleschi is there, bolted together in successive beams. Last of all, a long, straight staircase, straight because without turn to right or left, curves upward like an unradiant, bowed Valhalla-bridge to a great burst of daylight, and the climber is upon the top of the dome.

He is as completely cut off from the immediately

surrounding earth as upon a cloud-girdled mountain, for the dome swells so vastly below that the piazza cannot be seen about transept or choir, and not one of the apsidal domes shows a tile of its covering, while the nave, that huge and tremendous nave of Santa Maria, looks but a narrow, and a distant roof. At one's back, the marble of the lantern is handsome and creamy in color, but battered and broken; its interior is curious, — a narrow funnel of marble, little wider than a man's body, set with irons on either side, is the only ladder, so that the climb up is a close squeeze. There is a familiar something gone from the surroundings, and that something is soon remembered to be Dante's baptistery, which does not exist from Brunelleschi's dome, being blotted out by the façade of Santa Maria. One hundred feet below, showing its upper and richer portion gloriously from this novel point of view, is what from the piazza is the soaring bell tower, the Campanile of Giotto.

## II

We climbed the Campanile many times, and sat for hours sketching among the bells, great green fellows, beautiful in shape, as good bells are, beautiful, too, in their simple decoration which time has aided. They swing from their vermilion beams, in a sort of cage near the tower's top, and just behind the upper part of Talenti's windows, so that levers and tackle thrust themselves out of the marble quatrefoils, through which also one has lovely glimpses of villas, and hills, and Valdarno opening away towards Pisa. Within the Campanile, one walked upwards in the successive footsteps of Giotto, Andrea Pisano, and Francesco Talenti; Luca della Robbia has passed out of this stairway onto his scaffolding to chisel at his reliefs; Donatello has climbed here often, and on the day when they set up the Zuccone, he must have smiled complacent at his nicely calculated modelling, when he saw from the square that his broad chisel-strokes had given just the needed finish to his "Pumpkin-head."

One reached the bells by a large ladder leading from a small door in the cage, and down which one went among ropes and joists, wheels and pulleys.

Now and then the small bells jangled, and once in two hours Campanone, the great bell, boomed; he was too big for close quarters, and when he began to vibrate before sounding, it was well to run up the ladder and sit at a more comfortable distance from his ear-splitting roar. One had to beware of the Misericordia, next in size to Campanone, as there was no telling when he might ring; so at the first annunciating stroke of certain small bells (as many pilot-fishes to the monster), canvas and easel were snatched away, lest the beam should come crashing down upon them. They were right in its path, but the custodian at the tower foot had warned us, "If there is a *disgrazia*, an accident, in the town, the *piccolezza* [small fry] will ring sharply, and then the Misericordia bell will sound fifteen times." It did sound while we were there, and below on the square we saw the black-hooded brethren collecting before the Bigallo for their errand of mercy.

If Campanone is unpleasant at close quarters, he is delightful at a distance, and few things gave us more pleasure than the bells of Florence, ringing one awake in the early morning of the summer days. At quarter of five were heard the first humming vibrations growing in a stroke or two to the incredibly deep, yet melodious booming of Campanone. The mellow double peal of Santa Croce, the *bel doppio* that Italians love, joined with it. No penitential

tolling of American church bells was this, but a jubilant, leaping, rocking sound setting the air on fire; then the sharper-toned bells of Santa Maria Novella gave tongue, while All Saints, the Holy Spirit, the convents of the outlying hills, for a quarter of an hour swelled this concert in the upper air, till the unresonant staccato of the cracked bell of the Badia struck five, and the music died away, as it began, in a vibrant humming, felt even after it could be heard, as if the air ached with the ecstasy.

## III

In 1890 and 91 we saw them sweep away the accretions of two thousand years from the centre of Florence, literally disembowelling the city, tearing its heart out, said some, but for us, its heart beat rather in the People's Palace of the Piazza della Signoria. The process was not a rapid one; uprooting these hovels which were often stumps of towers striking deep into the earth, was like tunnelling rock, so that we did not see it all, but we were there before pick was laid to stone; we walked for months in the thickest of the havoc and saw later the inaugural statue of the king hoisted to its place and uncovered, a new Marius among the ruins. We watched the houses rising as others sank, and finally when the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele stood spick and span, smelling of plaster and putty, we walked upon the outer edges of it, lamenting still further depredations which broke away, now a section, and now the whole side of a street, in the quarters stretching southward to the river or northward to the cathedral.

Long before the destruction began, and while the old Mercato still stood, amid a labyrinth of blind

alleys and narrow lanes, famous by name through six centuries of history, we had heard rumors of sanification to be effected, of mighty changes to be made; then had come the question what should be done with the people who crowded these lanes and lived among the evil odors (and some agreeable ones, too, of frying polenta and roasting chestnuts), and *Projetti* began to appear upon the walls, printed in large letters under the arms of the municipality, developing a proposition to "decant" the population into new quarters which should be built outside the Porta San Frediano. At last, the destruction began, but the discussion continued; it was noised abroad that old Florence had been condemned by its own citizens; protests were signed even in England and America, until at last the Italian journals declared that the "demolition of the centre" was causing more fuss than the disputes over Fashoda or Madagascar. These petitions eventually had some effect, salutary, if perhaps only temporary; there was fierce defence of the new ordering of things, and there were fierce attacks upon it; as for us, we felt that some change was necessary, but that it was becoming too radical; that some destruction was desirable, but that there had been too much of it. No monuments having great beauty were sacrificed, but many curious buildings were swept away which, by their grouping, had yielded a picturesqueness that

through its personality became almost a landmark, and was to every visitor essentially Florentine. A space perhaps as big as Gramercy Park, containing the Ghetto and some of the worst streets, could have been spared with advantage to everybody. Even there some few bits might have been disinfected and preserved, but there could hardly be two opinions in regard to its need of sanification.

Those who have walked in the Chiasso de' Ricci, or the Chiasso de' Erri, or indeed many other lanes of the Mercato, know a little at least of what streets of mediæval towns could be under certain conditions. The time to walk there, if one wished to sympathize with the destroyers, was when there was neither sunshine nor storm; for the sun sanified the place, and showers purified it, stirring the stagnant kennel and drawing up the ooze into the air above the eaves, that nearly met across the way. Best, that is to say worst of all, was when the air was full of water just in suspension, turning the brown walls black, and painting the houses with all the flying impurities that might pass, caught in the dust that had become momentarily slime on the stucco rubbed smooth by age, or the brick made sharp by disintegration. Stretching out the hand one might touch either side of the clammy walls; might look up the narrow black openings where the ladder-like stairs climbed to the windows, air holes,

what you will, that had been pierced, grated, blocked up, and pierced again for six centuries, and one had some faint idea of what mediæval life was like in these lanes when typhus or the plague sat down in them to be their daily guest.

Those who know only the wide, airy streets of modern cities would find it hard to believe that life could have existed under such conditions, and many a cellar at home is dryer than were the rooms of these houses.

There are still hundreds of such streets in the mediæval quarters of European cities, hundreds such, as to narrowness, that is; but few quite so old or quite so dirty, for it is probable that one or two of the lanes destroyed followed the lines of ways which existed when Florence was an Etruscan suburb of Fiesole two thousand years ago. Why did they build so closely, the American asks himself, when Tuscany stretched away around them, and Arno opened its level valley to the hills on either side. History answers this question very shortly. The pressure of the times closed like a huge fist upon the mediæval cities, squeezing them into the smallest compass that could contain their life without stifling it; for if any of the latter slipped through the fingers of that fist, it was immediately extinguished by wolves or nobles who issued in packs from their woods or their castles, the

former by night, the latter by day, and were stopped only by walls and towers.

And were there no peasants in the outlying country to raise the crops? Yes, while the sun was up; but upon the horizon of the peasant's field was always the brown castello, the miniature town with its ramparts, its lane for a main thoroughfare, and its alleys for streets. You may ride through such, at Buonconvento, for instance, past town hall, church, and all in two minutes, from fortified gate to fortified gate, and in these walled villages the peasants quickly shut themselves, if danger were afoot.

Some of the aforesaid robber-nobles lived in town houses about the Mercato Vecchio during the winter months until finally the people bundled them out, and truncated their tall towers to an even height of seventy feet, while all through the middle ages and the early Renaissance great families clustered in the market's neighborhood, so that as the pick tore the old houses many an escutcheon came to light in the humblest places. Most of these buildings were ugly enough, but it seemed a pity to lose the column with its statue of Abundance, the statue that had long presided over a market, which, as its fourteenth century poet declared, "bore off the palm from every other piazza;" and surely they might have preserved Vasari's columned loggia of the Fish Market, and

made it a feature of the new ordering. The massiveness of the walls, was impressive, and probably in part from the frequency of the round arch the excavations often recalled by their appearance the ruins upon the Palatine and in the Roman forum.

In the summer of 1891, the last of the Mercato was going down. Already the north side of the Via del Fuoco had disappeared, and we watched from week to week, one after another of the ancient palaces laid bare as if the common soldiers fell about them first, and they, the chiefs, died last and hardest. It was like digging up a cemetery of old warriors, exposing, as the pick struck, bit after bit of the mouldering skeletons of the battered giants that grew into being when Florence was young. Little by little their armor of brick and mortar, stone and rubble, rusted by the rains of a thousand winters, fell in rattling showers upon the growing heap of rubbish, and the whole air was thick and white with the dust of departed glory. Wounded, they had been, too, these old houses, and they were cicatriced from battlement to basement by blocked up windows, smothered loggie, blind colonnades; by all the changes that had seen war and wealth and action, deaden into peace and poverty and sloth. The great upper windows that opened wide watchful jealous eyes in the days when Guelph looked across at Ghibelline, had shrunk till the lessened

space gave scarcely shoulder-room for frowzy gossips.

Soon all would be gone of a spot hardly less famous, hardly less populous with souvenirs than is the forum of Rome, the agora of Athens, but the air would be the sweeter and the city the healthier for its loss. The good these men of the Mercato did, lives after them in the archives of Florence, and in the statues and medallions and Robbia angels that were carried to the museum; and much evil was interred with the bones of the old houses, — evil of fever, damp, and stench, and foul deposit of centuries; nevertheless, the onlooker wished that they might not disappear so collectively and entirely. As the demolition progressed, one of the few consolations which came to those who doubted the judgment of the destroyers was, that, as houses and towers fell, new vistas were opened through the rubbish heaps: upon Or San Michele, the Strozzi palace, and especially the cathedral group. The Vecchietti palace, though just on the edge of the condemned region, was preserved; and the ermines of the escutcheon, who must have been little at ease in the dirt of the destruction, were cleaned and chiselled sharp again. The lovely, little palace-guild-house of the flax merchants stood long, like an island in a sea of rubbish, but at last it went down with the rest, and the space stretched level

from the Art of Wool, at the southeast corner, to the Archbishopric, severed in twain, its façade yet standing just at the brink of the excavations of the northeastern end, where the last waves of destruction broke almost against the base of the Baptistery.

From his *bel San Giovanni*, the patron saint, could now look down upon rare remains of a city, or, at any rate, of a burg which had been there before ever his fame, or that of his co-patron Santa Reparata, came to Valdarno; for the pick had pierced below the Florence of Dante, even below the foundations of that piazza which in Lombard days was called the forum of the king, and had reached masonry of a time when Etruscan Fiesole ruled from the hill above, and Florence was but a tributary suburb. It was a desolate place, and the lover of Florence, in looking at it, felt as if with the disappearance of a quarter grimy with dirt, but almost peerless in its historic interest, pages upon pages had been torn from her history.

Internecine battle had hammered most of the beauty out of these old houses; exhalations and deposits had fouled them; civic jealousy had lopped the towers with which the place once bristled like a porcupine; and even the stones looked leprous and blistered. Yet these same stones had once based towers and walled palaces; among them

Dante walked; Medici, bought and sold before Cosimo, the elder, was born, and long-gowned merchants prepared the wool which made Florence so famous, and so rich that the Florentine prisoner paid double ransom. Through these lanes, the Caroccio of the Republic rolled, with the banner of Florence at the mast, her best fighting men stationed upon it, its oxen and its driver clad alike in scarlet, while behind upon its car, the Martinella, the warbell, clanged unceasingly. These were the narrow ways which Guelph and Ghibelline barred with chains, which the fighting Corso Donati held Horatius-like; in the little piazza, near by the Flax Guild, Ginevra of the Amieri had shivered in her grave-clothes upon her kinsman's door-step begging for shelter. The whole procession of the middle ages passed through these streets; and Charles of France found them so dangerous and threatening that he gave up all thought of twisting Marzocco's tail, and passed on to other and more easily mastered cities. In his time, famous artists walked the quarter: Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and many another; there were shops of famous craftsmen in the Calimala, and very much to talk of and to write of, so that to-day there is a sad gap in the guidebooks at the pages where was once Mercato Vecchio, and where is now Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele. Before the quarter was laid wholly flat portions of

it began to rise again. We had hopes and fears; our fears came from what we had seen in the new streets of Rome, so did our hopes in part, for if much is bad in the Roman renewal, something is good, but, above all, it was fair to expect much from the examples which Florentines had all about them in streets that had been spared. In few cities is the type so admirable of private houses and semi-military palaces of Podestà or Gonfaloniere, whether of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth century. Even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the native purity and elegance of taste, together with the influence of older palaces, obtained so strongly, that there resulted a sobriety of architecture, foreign to the epoch in the rest of Italy, so that Florence, until "the demolition of the centre," had, within its antique limits, hardly a building to which the word "vulgar" could be applied.

The older palaces are austerity itself; and as one goes among them day after day, the taste is insensibly elevated; it is like living with Dante among books; and, in later times as well, the citizen was austere, if we compare his house with the more luxuriantly sculptured dwelling of his Gothic contemporary. He never tried to impose by richness of general decoration; but he loved weight and mass; he left the splendor of stone lacework to the northern contemporaries of Jacques Cœur and

Louis XII., but *his* house should rise like a cliff, ponderous, enduring, and sombre.

He never thought of sally, — a cube or a rectangle circumscribed his desires, but upon the vast flat surface of that rectangle, the ornament should be applied with true Tuscan feeling for proportion, and with that exquisite sense of quantity and fitness hardly excelled by the Greeks; while his ornament, what there was of it, should be elegant, original, and suited to the height. First of all, this true Etruscan would set his house upon a foundation that might hold up Babel, and laying the huge stones in their courses, he rough-hewed them into a grand bossage, — the only decoration fit for such a pedestal to such a house. Through this bossage, he opened windows like breaches in a city wall, then closed them again with heavy gratings, each one an immovable portcullis. A simple, round-arched door, oaken and studded with nail-heads as big as the fist, led to the central court-yard; above the bossage, the flat wall opened in a series of windows, round-topped, divided by a single mullion or colonnette, and presenting over double arches, surfaces filled gracefully with a *fleur de lys* or other ornament. Few decorative shapes could be simpler, hardly any could be more pleasing than these windows which characterize the brown streets of Florence, climb the hills of Siena, or line the

curving river at Pisa. Last of all, he terminated his palace by a grand cornice, and produced such buildings as the Strozzi and Medici palaces, the full expression of Tuscan civic art, and, perhaps, the grandest dwellings ever inhabited by private citizens.

There are many other palaces ranging over a period of four centuries which are worthy of the modern builder's attention, notably two, which make the corner of the Borgo degli Albizzi and the Via del Proconsolo, and looking at them the visitor may wonder that with this lesson three minutes' walk removed from the new piazza Florentines did not profit more by it. Of these a fifteenth century palace, the Pazzi-Quaratesi is almost as fine as the Strozzi; while the Buontalenti, often called the Non-finito, torso though it be, and utterly different, is admirable too. It was built in 1592 in the *barocco* style, but triumphs over the *barocco* or anything which is not grand, for it has preserved the austerity of Florence through all its overweighting, and has a brown and sombre magnificence that is its own. In our long and frequent visits to Florence, we lived within a few steps of this corner, and passed it many times a day, yet never without the same strong impression, the same abiding admiration for these two palaces, which, beetling above the narrow Borgo, overhanging you with their grated windows, overshadowing you with their cornices, al-

most shutting out the sky, thrust the huge stones of their bossage upon you, and seem to say: "You only pass here because we choose to let you."

The oldest palaces, those of the thirteenth century, are sterner even than the stern Strozzi; they stand among the later houses like fighting men with vizors down amid the grave, long-gowned scholars and lawgivers of the *quattrocento*. Their walls rise sheer and plain, sometimes to the very top of the battlements (for they often keep their merlons, square-headed, if Guelph, forked, if Ghibelline), sometimes broken at the summit by the corbelled parapet; their plainly bordered windows are but slightly recessed, and the grating sets its teeth down hard into the stone, instead of caging the whole opening, as in later palaces. Nothing can be simpler, and yet like the plain, unornamented, fighting armors nothing can be more full of character than these buildings which once filled the *primo cerchio*, and made up the passionately loved and hated Florence of Dante and of Farinata.

Two among them are incomparably finer than their fellows, and prove that if the Italian castles of the *contado* seem never to have been quite native to the country, these castle-palaces of civic communities were superbly spontaneous and original. One does not tire of the beauty of the Bargello's interior, or the Palazzo Vecchio's exterior; the stair-

case and loggie of the former leave a lasting picture in the mind, and the great tower of the latter, seeming to spring forth from the palace-parapet like a Victory poised upon one foot, and launching itself into the air, may say to the Campanile of Giotto: "If you are the most beautiful of all towers, I am the most audacious."

With such examples before them, the builders of the new Piazza might have made it quintessentially Florentine, without sacrificing convenience to æsthetic appearance; as it is they have been contented with something not quite bad, but thoroughly commonplace. A bronze equestrian statue of Victor Emmanuel stands in the centre of the square, and behind it a sort of triumphal arch spans the Via Strozzi and affords a vista through which one may enjoy a fine view of the tail and hind legs of the horse. There are also plate-glass shop-windows and much gaslight, and the Florentine may contemplate with satisfaction (if he be Browning's person of quality), —

"— the square with the houses, Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there 's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines not a single front awry!
Green blinds as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly."

It is the consummate expression of modern Italian taste. Meantime the houses which Donatello liked to look at are gone, yes, and some stones rubbed by Dante's shoulders.

Worse still, after the new piazza had risen, the pick did not cease, but, like Lars Porsena's messengers, travelled east and west, and south and north, especially south. Hard by Or San Michele, the narrow street spanned by an arch buttressing a house in which Andrea del Sarto had his workshop, fell into rubbish heaps, and why? There was no dirt there; it was a clean little street, wide enough for the traffic that passed through it, and picturesque by reason of the corbelled and battlemented parapet that overhung its western side. One trembled for the little Piazza dei Cerchi, where Tito woke up on the day he first met Romola, and where the circlets of the arch-famous family may yet be seen on the bossage of shops that once were palaces; one feared, too, for the Piazza dei Cimatori, but fortunately they lay a little without the doomed territory. Not so the Place of the Mercato Nuovo, and a great breach was opened opposite one side of the lovely Renaissance arches; a barbarism shocking enough to make Tacca's splendid boar snarl, or to bring Cennini and the other old Florentines down from their niches upon the vandal workmen.

"Florence belongs not to *forestieri* but to Floren-

tines, and they may do as they please," we are told. Yes, and a beautiful woman's face belongs to her; but if she tattoos her nose we all regret the most unnecessary effect of such local elaboration upon the features remaining *in statu quo*. And thus it is here, for it is the effect of all the features together that we love in Florence, and there is little need to enlarge streets where the traffic is slight. "Every one of our important buildings will be most carefully preserved," they tell us; yes, we reply, but it is not the buildings isolated and ticketed as curiosities, but standing in the midst of their homelier, but characteristic and contemporary environment that we wish to see; if Ghiberti's gates and Brunelleschi's Dome draw us to Florence, it is the general character of the city that makes us linger there. The little streets are so familiar to the Florentine that they are dull to him; he does not always realize their interest, but even he will admit, when his attention is roused, that a butterfly against its native landscape is handsomer than when impaled in a box, even though the opportunity for examination be greater in the latter case. Not all Italians need convincing; the country is full of patient and enthusiastic students of her monuments; there are local and national societies, and nowhere have the remains of the past been more exhaustively photographed than in Italy. Learned societies,

backed by the foreign signers of petitions, have come to the aid of many a menaced street; many a quaint bit has been reprieved; Borgo San Jacopo still curves along the Arno side in its old picturesqueness; the towers of the Amedei, the Consorti, the Marsili, still break the sky-line of roofs, and the palaces of the Guelphic Party, of the Giandonati, have had a stay of proceedings granted them. The Palace of the Canacci may even be restored; the pick has ceased its labors, and at least for a while to come, we may visit not only old Florentine monuments, but what is different and better, old Florence.

# THE AGE OF PREPARATION

# THE AGE OF PREPARATION

THE word Renaissance is magical in its potentiality, and yet in hearing it we are apt to recall only the achievements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, forgetting the great age of preparation which preceded it, became merged in it, and belonged to it as utterly as childhood belongs to human development.

Italy is the daughter of antiquity, and the enduring strain of antique blood not only kept the Italian an Italian, but preserved for him, what has been his lasting birthright and inheritance from the ancient world, the sense of order, and the sense of form.

The Ostrogoths and Longobardi might hold the peninsula, as they did for five centuries; little by little they became Italian. Roman law made its own way by its own weight, and with the relative order which came thereby, the plastic sense of the old Etruscan and Greek awoke again, and began that work which eventually shaped the Renaissance.

For many hundred years, Italy was a Medea's cauldron of bloody limbs, of battle and massacre;

but after five centuries, the charm worked, and Æson walked again, a new man, the Italian, made up of many ingredients which had been cast into the cauldron by both indigenous Latin, and Latinized barbarian. This new man was the Tuscan or the Lombard, the Ligurian or the Venetian, and in his making the northman, the barbarian, had his important part. To begin with, the sword of the northman was a ploughshare turning up for the new seeds the nearly exhausted soil of Italy, and he brought to the orderly understanding of the Roman, the imagination and the fantasy of the North. Already Italy began to show herself the mother of the arts, of modern building and of modern warfare; of building in the churches of Pisa and Lucca, of war in the revival of the infantryman, the descendant of the Roman legionary.

Upon the other battlefields of Europe, the mounted knight, the gentleman, was the soldier, the footman was hardly more than a cipher, but in Italy the burgess marched afoot, and had his own tactics. His rallying point was the caroccio or chariot of the city; this was a huge, wheeled platform, carrying the banner of the republic, and a score or so of her best fighting men. It was drawn by three yoke of oxen, and the choice of these beasts was strategic, for the caroccio was the palladium of the commonwealth; it might never under any cir-

cumstances be abandoned by the main body of the troops, and the slow pace of the oxen absolutely prevented either a reckless pursuit of a flying enemy, or a disorderly retreat on their own part. Rallying beside his caroccio, the Italian became the first infantryman since the days of the Roman empire, and successfully resisted the Transalpine cavalrymen.

The north of Italy was already a beehive of republican cities, whose townsmen were at once traders, artisans, sailors, and soldiers. The north belonged to itself; the south belonged to the Normans, for the eleven sons of Tancred de Hauteville had left their farm upon the English channel, had gone to Calabria and Sicily, and had earned, every one of the eleven, a crown or a coronet. Theirs seemed a fantastic kingdom made up of Italians, Campanians, Greeks, and Arabs, but it was solid and fruitful and full of potential importance to Italian cultivation; for the rule of the Norman French made relations with Southern France frequent, and Southern France was the convenient highway to Mohammedan Spain, where centuries of Arab civilization had stored up a whole reservoir of learning that was ready to pour out upon the fields of Provence.

In this prologue to the Renaissance we may broadly distinguish two epochs: first, that of the

fight for independence, of the burgs against the emperor; next, of the internal struggle of city with city. Coeval with these strifes, we have the rise of architecture, sculpture, and painting.

North and South of Italy were alike claimed by the German Kaiser, who, as inheritor of Charlemagne's empire, called all men his vassals and made them such, if he were able. The old and fixed German idea was that to the successors of the great Charles belonged the iron crown of Monza, the homage, the lands, and the money of their Italian subjects. Equally fixed was the Italian idea that Cæsar might have the crown and the homage, and be welcome to them, but might not have the rest! So settled was this conviction in the Italian mind that not cities razed could raze *it;* for, with a red glare in the north, Milan, the protagonist of Liberty, became its protomartyr, as, levelling houses and churches, Barbarossa sent his ploughshares over her. Scattering its citizens among the neighboring towns, the unwitting Cadmus-Cæsar sowed the dragon's teeth of independence; for as the fugitive told, from the Alps of Savoy to the Lagoons, his tale of two years' battle and hunger, there sprang up, fully armed, for every Milanese, ten townsmen of whatever place might be, and where Verona, Vicenza, Padua opened the way, city after city entered into line, and Pope Alexander himself headed

the crusade against the German, and stood godfather to the city hastily built to hinder Frederic. The fight came at Legnano, where the burghers had a new caroccio, in place of the one which the emperor broke up at Milan, and where, by the help of the blessed Saint Ambrose, and of the "cohort of Death" which fought about the chariot, they had their revenge and captured the very buckler of the Cæsar. And so Italy was fairly launched in the struggle for liberty which should not end till Pope and Emperor had broken each other, and Manfred lay dead in the Garigliano, and the burgs had conquered freedom to cut each other's throats!

Almost before the first great act in this age of preparation, the act of the achieving of independence was completed, there commenced, with even bitterer blows than were struck at Legnano, the struggle between the spirit of free inquiry and the spirit of dogma. For the tree of knowledge began to tempt men, and before it, with fire and sword, stood stubborn guardians, Innocent the Pope, Dominic the Saint, and many another. "The fruit thereof is evil and whoso eateth shall die," said these high priests militant; and the kings and people believed them, for the tree had been pretty well windswept, and the Ostrogothic and Lombard centuries had made such a scarecrow of it that it might indeed look a very upas.

But the spirit of inquiry was abroad, and now came Doubt riding from Provence, clad in so many guises that weapons could hardly touch it, or watchfulness spy it out: Doubt clad as troubadour, thinking that life is pleasant; as artist, seeing that the world is good to look at; as poet, singing its beauties; Doubt crystallizing into Science under the gaberdine of a Jewish physician, with the wisdom of the Arabs in his saddle-bags, and coming to be publicly proscribed, and secretly enriched, by his noble patients. From Sicily, where Roger the Norman had long expected it, since his mother country of Montferrat had Provence at its ear, advanced another army of Doubt, troubadours, singers, poets. Nothing could hold them in check, though Dogma did its best; the Inquisition flashed a new and dreadful name in letters of fire upon the sky of Southern France at Albi; the Mendicant orders trooped to the rescue, brown Franciscans did kindly ministry in the cottages of the poor; Dominicans, in the palaces of the rich, fought fire with fire, and Science was confuted by scholasticism and learned argument, by doctors mystic, doctors angelic, doctors seraphic.

All was useless, the army of doubters, turned the great fortress of Rome, and altogether converged upon Tuscany the land of the olive, and of promise. And this was the second act of the drama, the

*toscaneggiamento*, the Tuscanizing of Italian, the converting of dialects into a language; all these rebecs and viols of Sicily, these zitherns and psalteries of Provence, in the hands of trouvères and of troubadours, were to play in unison the prelude to that mighty chant of Dante which a half century later was to sing of Heaven and Earth in the first modern language. It was an age of love poetry and concetti; the boughs of the tree of knowledge began to fill with singing birds of gayest plumage; hawks and hounds went with the troubadours; cunning dresses adorned them, for man, who had been for centuries a bristling hedgehog of steel and iron points, had become a peacock, and strutted in his new-found feathers. If this seems somewhat futile, at least it was fair to look at, as the mediæval pageants threaded the boughs, and Guido here and Guittone there sung among the branches, like the little figures that nestle with strange viols and psalteries and opened lips among the deeply carved leaves of the capitals of early churches. Only a century later, after this rustling of spring leaves, there came the rustle of leaves of another kind, up and down the length of Italy and from far-away convents of Germany and Switzerland, the rustle of parchment and palimpsest. For the sap had stirred in the roots of the tree that stretched away to Byzantium and to Greece; man

had got the book of knowledge wide-open again, and was trying to spell; soon he read, and the peacock become eagle soared straight at the sun.

But before this outburst, the new birth, which ended the drama of preparation, there came an interlude of iron music. It was the age of Dante and Boccaccio, but it was an age of uncontrollable spirit, and while men argued and disputed, while the students filled the schools, their swords filled the streets with brawls.

Hardly had the Lombard League hung up the hacked blade and dinted shield, than contemporaneously with the struggle between inquiry and dogma, the internecine strife of the burgs, the battles within the walls, began. Guelph and Ghibelline had ceased to mean Pope and Emperor, but they fought as fiercely as ever. Beginning in Florence at the foot of Mars's column by killing the lover almost before his bride, they carried their arms to Pistoja, Siena, all parts of Tuscany, watering the plant of hatred with blood of kinsmen and brothers. Mounting upon the circling whirlwind of party vengeance to the destruction and insult of all things sacred and profane, they dragged the citizen from his home, the home from its soil, the huge palace from its base, at length tearing God from the cross, "because He turned His head to the Guelphic side." Consider the Tus-

cans, the chosen people of the arts and letters; interdicts, fire, flood, sieges, battles in the field, in the street, destruction by wholesale and by detail, did their abounding life withstand. Trading throve apace, salamander-like, in a blazing Tuscany; property was destroyed, and money piled itself up withal; whole quarters of the cities crashed to the ground beneath the blows of Neri and Bianchi, and while axe, mace, and sword were playing upon each other about their very bases, wonders of architecture arose, — the Campanile of Giotto, Or San Michele, the townhalls of Gubbio and Pistoja and Volterra, and those twin towers of Florence and Siena, the Vecchio and the Mangia, true flowers of the soil, that strange soil into which modern art, vital and unconquerable, intertwining itself with "the blood-red blossom of war," struck deep root. How were hands found to do and undo so much? A war with the great despot of Verona reduced the Florentines to the utmost straits; no sooner was it over, than they fell to fighting among themselves to keep their hands in. Arno itself attacked the city, and one terrible night the river rushed fathoms deep through her streets, leaving her open and defenceless, with a half mile breach in her walls; hardly were the stones dry, when the swords were out again. The plague of 1348 visited her with such horrors as one does not like to think of; the

plague ended, she gave thanks in her churches, and planned an expedition against Siena.

To the mediæval Italian, political economy meant civic aggrandizement, and aggrandizement in those days wore the sword and used it; prosperity meant crops in one's own *contado*, silks and woollens in one's own warehouses, burnt crops in the enemy's country, and craftsmen out of work in her streets; political liberty meant civic autonomy at home, and as much damage, dissension, and intrigue as possible in other cities. Expeditions of town against town succeeded each other; there were grotesque insult and bloody battle; Lords of Lucca running the Pallone, the foot-ball race, under the walls of the besieged; the "useless mouths" forced pitilessly out of the gates, and beaten back by the besiegers, to starve in the ditches; candidates for election were thrown from windows, and "the free vote" of the burgess was controlled by sword and lance. Once the shadow of Visconti, the great Duke of Milan, loomed so large and near that partisans trembled and united in the Tuscan cities; the shadow passed away into death, all hearts were relieved and all hands fought merrily again. Florentine gentlemen went to pacify distracted Pistoja, and finding the game of assassination too fascinating to be resisted, killed each other as generously as did the natives.

It is all easy to conceive as one walks the lanes

of that *primo cerchio,* which Dante sang and Farinata saved. Too great success upon the market, or above all at the elections, had made others look with lowering faces upon the favored candidates, until the lucky white beans had given office to so many Donati or Cerchi that the palaces of Buondelmonti and Amieri fairly boiled with pent-up party hatred. Then there would be the spark to the train, when young lads of either family met by chance, perhaps in some narrow way by the Calimala where passage without jostling was impossible, and when swords lay so loose in their sheaths that jostling shook them out. Blows would be struck, and in the little street the cry would go up that the factions were out again. From the stone counters of the open-air shops the pieces of woollen, the gold and silver trinkets, were hastily drawn in, and the wooden shutters met behind the gratings. Passers caught up their children onto their shoulders, and hurried into the side streets, looking fearfully behind them for the rush of men and horse that might come when the news had passed up Por Santa Maria to the Amieri, or down to the piazza of the Donati, and had set the fierce Corso on horseback. Into the little piazza itself, where the allied palaces stood back to back, and whose ponderous outer doors had clanged to at the first alarm, poured a stream of

cousins and brothers; the women were at the windows; the lackeys bringing the light, open helmets to their masters, or buckling the cuirasses. Some of the lads were already on horseback, waiting for no armor, and would fight bare-sark, like that young Astorre Baglioni whom Raphael saw holding the Perugian street, a glorious and unwitting model for his warrior saints. But the horses were few, even the great houses did not stable many, the streets were slippery and the chains dangerous, for the chains, too, at the first thought of attack, had been dragged out by the lackeys and hooked into the staples on either side of the street-opening; while behind them a group of pikemen, sheltered by the angle of the way, stood ready to break the first rush of the adverse faction, till the bowmen in the windows above should thin them out. Meantime the white-haired chief of the family, head and captain of some such fighting race of merchants as the Bardi or Peruzzi, climbed the stairs to loggia or tower, since the hand that wrote bills of exchange could direct a mangonel cunningly, and the eyes which were keen for the glitter of gold could spy, too, the glint of an enemy's steel as it approached through the narrow ways.

Such was the tempest which beat upon the cradle of Italian art, yet through it all, the artists went and came; Niccolà fortified at Naples for Charles

of Anjou and at Gaeta for the Pope, carved votive images for robber barons and pulpits for robber prelates; Giotto, threading the battles and slaughters from north to south, painted the story of a pitying Saviour, not fearing to set Faith, Hope, and Charity upon the walls of the city of Ezzelino the cruel.

Never were line and compass, brush and chisel more active. Arnolfo made Florence over again; and Siena took her present shape; Cimabue and Giotto journeyed over the mountains of Umbria, and spent long months under the heavy arches of Saint Francis at Assisi; an angel population crowded the walls of Italy, — angels which began to move their arms and bodies, and seemed so beautiful to a naïf and earnest age, that Borgo Allegri took its new name as the youths and maidens bore, like a great banner, the Madonna of Cimabue to the transept of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Gaddi and Memmi, in the same church, covered the chapel of the Spaniards with frescoes; Spinello painted at Arezzo, the Lorenzetti in Pisa and in their native city of Siena; thus, amid the havoc of war, beauty began to form itself into lasting shapes, and as in ancient pictures lovely ladies sit against tapestries of fighting men and monsters, against the discord the Vita Nuova and the pictures of Giotto arose and lived, and in the intervals of the trumpet's blaring, one heard the throbbing of the lutes.

# MANTUA

# MANTUA

## I

BEHIND wide stretches of pale-green water, now flat and glassy, now lightly ruffled, Mantua rises in long silhouette of parapeted, tile-capped brick work, lovely with a silver-gray bloom born of the marsh damp. Against the sky are the towers and the curved dome of Alberti's church. In front, at the water's edge, the town is buttressed by the bulk of the Gonzaga's castle, so vast that all the shining water seems but its moat, the head of the long bridge but its barbican. It is a moat, however, upon which the lateen-rigged boats may sail till they reach the Mincio, then onward to the Po and that delta which will take the traveller southward to Ravenna, or northward to Chioggia, Torcello, and Venice.

Florence and Venice were both nursery and market-place; Mantua was neither, nor was it the seat of local patrons spending the local earnings upon the fostering of native pride. The master of Mantua went afield for his fortune, but devoted his fighting wages to the arts as liberally as to his hired soldiery, and brought back honestly acquired spoil from the

studios of North and South, until the great Marchioness, the Marchesana Isabella, became the archetypal collector of the Renaissance. Gianfrancesco and Lodovico had preceded her, and masters came to them as well as masterpieces. For Gianfrancesco worked Pisanello, the medallist, whose people of bronze seem so fleshlike, whose painted people so metallic, and Alberti, the wizard of the early Renaissance, the precursor of Leonardo. To Lodovico came Mantegna, and to his children, Giulio Romano and Primaticcio.

Thus, the Florentine and the Roman, the Paduan and the Veronese, have dowered the city, and have given to the Gonzaghe a glory which their swords could not gain. Much of that concrete glory is gone: burned, or stolen in the German sack; sold to rich customers beyond the Alps, or mouldered off the walls in the marsh vapors. But much remains: the Church of Alberti; the frescoes of Mantegna; the ceilings of the Reggia; the palaces of Giulio; the *stucchi* of Primaticcio, — and these are the things that the wise tourist comes to see in Mantua. Yet there is more; there is the city itself, which takes its place in the long chain of unending surprises, the chain in which no one link is like another in this inexhaustible Italy.

Mantua has changed greatly in the last quarter of a century, thanks to the blessed, moving water that

is everywhere, and which means Power. In streets which were dark and dull twenty-five years ago, electric lights abound and yield a factitious moonlight, as if Manto, the eponymous witchmother, were abroad with her magic; bicycle advertisements flaunt in gay colors upon the old walls; modern wonders these, both cycle and incandescent bulb, that would tempt Alberti to rise from his grave to study them. Our old albergo had a bright red damsel "scorching" pasted flat upon its front door; a furnace warming the rooms; and, chief of all wonders, a modern system of plumbing. We should not have been more surprised to have found P. Virgilius Maro among the arrivals upon the guest-book. Authors have written of "stagnant Mantua." "Ma pur si muove." The five courts of the Reggia stagnate surely enough, but the court-yard of our "Golden Eagle" was lively with commercial travellers, comers and goers by the railway which is but recently become a through line, and contributes not a little to the increased animation of the place. In a hundred ways one sees that this is no longer the Mantua which seemed fainting of inanition and marsh poison, when we saw it only a short fifteen years ago, but a reviving town with potentialities.

We arrived on market day, and our hostelry was upon the Via Sogliari, which, with even more than the usual picturesque irregularity, zigzags through

the town between yellow-washed arcades on handsome columns, like a meandering stream of light and color, widening now and again into bays, which are the Piazze delle Erbe, di Dante, di Sordello, and where men in cocked hats and wide trousers under their long aprons looked as if they had stepped out of so many Piranesi engravings. The Piazza delle Erbe was full of these comic-opera supers, and of vegetables and huge toadstool-like umbrellas as well, the clock tower with its quaint dial overlooking them all. The Piazza Dante has Alberti's Church of Sant' Andrea; while the Sordello holds the Cathedral and the Reggia Gonzaga, the pile which before and after all others is interesting in Mantua.

## II

EVERY town in Italy was in a way art-producing; yet we can roughly divide her cities into creators of art and collectors of art like Florence, Venice, Siena, where the people themselves were a source, a well-spring, or Rome, Milan, Mantua, where the throne was a magnet. The cruel despots of Padua and Verona built and adorned; the enlightened despots of Urbino and Mantua built and adorned too, but added the culture which comes only to tolerance and relative freedom. Urbino taught the courtly graces in Luciano da Laurana's palace, and gave them to Europe in Castiglione's Cortegiano; but Mantua, behind the defences of her marshlands, outlived the little beleaguered mountain-duchy, had more money and more time to buy pictures and statues, and shared even the Cortegiano, since there is a Castiglione palace on the Sordello Square, and Baldassare's body is in the votive church of Santa Maria Alle Grazie. Thus, the Reggia, the castle, stands for the culture of Mantua; and when we try to realize the great Marchioness, we think of her as throned here among the marshes, a kind of Mariana Isabella in this moated Gonzaga grange which stretches away, cov-

ering a whole quarter of the town; enclosing five vast courts, overhanging now the water, now the Gran Piazza; battlemented and towered, holding its private church and chapels; a great rambling, damp, decaying, deserted, yet splendid castle-palace of the Gonzaga, Imperial Vicars, Captains, Marquises, and Dukes of Mantua.

For all the marsh damp, one breathes more freely here than in many another castle. Souvenirs of the dungeons and poisons of Ferrara give way to pleasanter thoughts, for the memory of a good man, of Vittorino da Feltre, best of humanists, hovers like a benediction over the place. When he came to the great palace to teach, he left to the little lords of Mantua their swords and shields, for, like their cousins Montefeltro of Urbino, they should be *condottieri* from father to son; he taught them polite letters as well, for south of the Alps in the middle *quattrocento, noblesse obligeait* to many things besides fighting. The spirit of the times dabbled in printing and painting, music, poetry, theatricals, architecture most of all, and the Marquis, since he must needs incarnate that spirit, should be dilettante at home and collector abroad; but besides these acquirements which the epoch and their station imposed, besides the Latin poems of fourteen-year-old Gian Lucido, "the beautiful Greek" of ten-year-old Cecilia, the princely pupils

learned something else. The man who in an age of grasping, sycophantic, foul-mouthed scholars had opened a free school in Padua for poor students, taught his Mantuan lordlings that not all contemporaneous methods were good; that treaty-breaking, stealing fortresses by murdering their captains under a flag of truce, and poisoning cardinals at one's own dinner-table, were ungentlemanly practices. Such teaching may not strike the modern mind as radical, but it wrought sensibly in the *quattrocento;* and the Marquises of Mantua grew up to "ride and draw the bow" as well as their fellows of Ferrara and Milan, and "to speak the truth," at least somewhat more frequently than the latter. That they fought manfully, the field of Fornovo, where seven Gonzaga lay dead after the battle, could testify, and their glory as enlightened rulers is dimmed by fewer treasons and tragedies than were seen by the castles of the Estensi and Sforza.

Isabella herself was Estense, but she was a born *connaisseuse* as well, and what a time and what a treasure she had to choose in and from! She had Mantegna at her hand to select antiques for her, and would even condescend to wheedle or bully him out of things which he had bought for himself; she set on her cardinal brother to watch the young Michelangelo's career in Rome, and surprise, if possible, the secret of the buried Cupid; she sat in

the jewel-casket-like rooms of her Paradiso, and prepared long-winded instructions framed by attendant humanists for the worriment of painters who composed her allegories; she carefully measured with her own hands the wall panels of her Grotta, and, trusting to no figures, sent ribbons of the exact length to Perugino, accompanying the aforesaid instructions. Let us hope that the ribbons did not shrink before arrival, or the instructions swell after the composition was traced upon the panel. She had Leonardo for her visitor, and Titian for her portrait painter, and, to her honor as a *connaisseuse*, she recognized the talent of a Correggio when a Bembo, with all his assumption of art knowledge, passed him by unheeding. She sent to Aldus for new editions, read the first printed Decameron, and patronized Ariosto and Castiglione; did ever a ducal blue-stocking have so royal a time? Surely in the world of arts and letters "*oncques ne fut jamais plus triomphante princesse.*" And though she was Estense by blood, and Gonzaga only by marriage, the palace seems most of all hers, even if many of the decorations left there now were executed a generation later, for her son whom we see as a curly-headed boy in Raphael's school of Athens.

In most of the great buildings which have fallen into decay, — ruined abbeys, churches, temples, —

the roof is the one thing sure to be absent. In the Ducal Palace of Mantua, the ceilings are the things which remain *in situ*, and sometimes quite unchanged, and these ceilings, with their sculptures, bosses, and medallions, and scroll-work patterns on frieze and cornice, are an unending delight as one passes from chamber to chamber and wonders at the "spacious times" of the Renaissance, at the Italian audacity which balked at nothing where height and breadth counted, and which makes the frame of modern life seem scamped and confined. This large freedom of Renaissance life is recognized everywhere in Italy, and remembering Roman, Florentine, Genoese palaces, one may not make one city yield precedence to another; still nowhere else does the line of splendidly carved wooden ceilings stretch out so interminably as here; it seems as if provinces must have been denuded of timber for the material and ingots of gold hammered into leaf to cover them; literally, the chisels of three centuries were active here.

Other Italian cities possess finer situations, finer architecture, finer pictures than Mantua: nowhere is there such a series of ceilings; not often pictured like those of the Venetian Ducal Palace, which are merely gorgeous frames to canvases of Veronese and Tintoretto, but real ceilings where the stucco work and decorative carving form the main motive.

Such daintily rich cofferings are not to be seen elsewhere; such bracketing and such delicate cornices; such infinite convolution of tiny scroll-work, of gold upon gold, or gold on blue, picked out at times with red, white, and black. They have been a treasure-trove to the decorators of our own times, but to describe them is useless; they must be visited, or at least seen in photographs. A cursory description of the rooms takes up many pages of the local guide, and the traveller through the Reggia, making each time a "circular trip" and under guidance, is too bewildered by the vastness and the number ("there are five hundred rooms," says the *custode*, "a visit to all would take the day, for only the most remarkable are shown") to remember their sequence, either topographical or historic.

Duke Vincenzo I. rendered the topography puzzling by joining the divided portions of the older castle in several places, making labyrinth yet more labyrinthine; and all semblance of historic sequence is deceptive, for seventeenth and eighteenth century princes have overlaid the work of *quattrocento* predecessors. The place is a monument to that first and last passion of sovereigns, the love of building. Guido Bonacolsi in the fourteenth century raised what became the nucleus of the Reggia; the first Gonzaga drove him out of it and

Francesco, fourth of his race, brought the citadel, the *rocca*, into being. Lodovico, second Marquis, invited Mantegna and Alberti to his court, and in the great hall of the Bonacolsi wing gave hospitality to that Papal Council which Pius II. called together, and Pinturicchio celebrated in his fresco of the Sienese Library. Francesco, husband of Isabella d'Este, added Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar to the decorations of the Reggia, and his wife built the beautiful apartments called La Grotta and Il Paradiso. Federigo, proclaimed Duke by Charles V., added to the castle, in honor of his new dignity, the apartments called those of the Trojan Cycle, and when he fell heir to still another title — that of Marquis of Montserrat — he again celebrated it in brick and mortar, laying out the Cavallerizza, the court-yard for jousts and tourneys, and building the great gallery called the Mostra. The vast and splendid pile was not yet big enough for Duke Vincenzo I. (1587–1612), who nearly ruined the state by his extravagance, and added gardens, galleries, and corridors, where Rubens was among his guests and must have found not a little to admire.

The family blood was beginning to run out as well as the family money. Francesco II. reigned only a few months, yet found time to make the great Mostra gallery over again. Vincenzo II. lasted but a year, but made terrible inroads upon the treas-

ures of the Reggia, selling to Charles I. of England pictures by Titian, Tintoretto, Correggio, and del Sarto. Perhaps it was as well, for three years afterwards came the horrible pillage of Mantua, a legendary sack, where the descendants of Frundsberg's *Lanzknechten* remembering the traditions of Prato and Wallenstein's *Reiter*, emulated the brutalities of Bourbon's soldiers. "What they could not carry away, they destroyed," and much of the gauntness of the Reggia of to-day dates from that terrible year 1629.

But the passion for building would not down; it was even catching, and infected the "wise and brave" French princess, Marie de Nevers, for the Nevers had succeeded the extinct elder branch of the Gonzaga. Her husband had unwittingly saved Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar, by selling the panels to Charles of England just before the siege. Marie restored the Reggia, as well as she could, and, abandoning the rooms looking on the lake, dug up the art treasures which had been buried to save them from the artillery that had battered the Reggia from the height of San Giorgio. Finally, nothing daunted by the ruin that had gone before, nowise willing to fall below the elder branch in her honoring of great traditions, she added to the palace the grand staircase which still ushers in the visitor.

They were a brave race of builders surely, the

Gonzaga, with the ruling passion strong even in death. Ferdinando Carlo, the last Duke, wished, by added constructions, to turn the whole Reggia into a prodigious parallelogram, but the money going to the war-fund, the war turning against him, he was driven from Mantua, and died in Padua, but not until, thinking last of all of his beloved palace and his precious works of art, he had divided among the Mantuan churches, corporations, and his private friends, more than nine hundred pictures, besides marbles and smaller objects, lest they should fall into the hands of his enemies.

Mantua, which had always been fief of the Empire since Henry VIII. made a Bonacolsi Imperial vicar, was now Austrian, in and of the Empire. Under Maria Theresa, the great gallery called the Hall of the Rivers, Sala dei Fiumi, was painted by Giorgio Anselmi, and Mantua, for a time, bustled with building of all kinds. The double eagle, however, was soon followed by the more normal bird with a single head, which surmounted the banners of Eugène Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy. Then, the Austrians came back again, damaging the frescoes by bad restoration, turning the upper rooms into political prisons, the Cavallerizza, Stivali, Mostra, Troia, and Scuderie, into barracks, renting to private families the apartments of the Paradiso and the Grotta, and doing little but evil in this darkest hour

that preceded the dawn of Italian liberty. In 1866, Mantua re-entered the great Italian family, and at once the Augean stable was cleansed of Austrian leavings, the palace was put under the care of a commission for the preservation of national monuments, the whitewash was removed from frescoes, and commemorative monuments and busts arose upon all sides.

The modern æsthete is wont to shudder with horror at Italian restoration, and to call all Italian taste bad after 1580 or so; but has any other race of men since the Greeks ever felt more strongly or continually the need about them of that beauty which art brings, than the branch of the human family to which these Mantuans belonged? In this succession of rooms, covering four centuries of endeavor, so often, alas! brought to naught, it is hopeless to attempt description: certain *ensembles* here, certain details there, remain as pictures in the memory and can be recorded. In the main there is the impression of the endless *enfilade* of rooms; some of them are remarkably high in proportion to their size, many of the halls are *cinquecento* as to ceiling and for six feet down or so, and below that are in the style which we call Empire. The combination is not a bad one, for the stucchi of Primaticcio are the very prototypes of those of the Canova-David epoch. The younger Lorenzo Costa's Zodiacal signs,

painted in the hall named from them, have the decorative quality that is inseparable from the subject, and a certain impressiveness as well. The Trojan Cycle of Giulio Romano, on the contrary, is made up of grinning, gesticulating figures; according to the local guide, Giulio's "immortal pencil is here "worthy to vie with Homer's and Virgil's verse;" but the opinion will hardly be shared by the transalpine tourist.

All of the great rooms murmur "*sic transit*," but some of them owe their interest to a specific regret felt by the traveller; among these is the *Saletta* of the twelve Emperors, painted by Titian, and the room in which nine empty panels mark the place where Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar, of which the artist wrote, "I really am not ashamed to have painted them," once wound about the walls. Other rooms stand out by the conspicuous richness, originality, or elegance of their ceiling and frieze decoration and carving. But there is so much to study that in each visit the head is finally tired, and one is glad to go to the windows of the Mostra and to the warm, damp, yet sun-filled air of the Cavallerizza, the handsome, oblong court where grass now springs, and where once the horses trampled in the tourney or galloped at the quintain. A more intimate and sympathetic place, even in its ruin, is the diminutive "hanging garden," where in tiny tombs Duke

Federigo laid away the dogs and little birds, "*Che delle molte sue razze erano a lui i piu cari;*" and where the lover of animals will certainly record, among his Mantuan memories of Mantegna and Isabella and all the rest, the name of the "little dog Oriana — excellent in form, fidelity, playfulness."

Chief among the rooms of the Reggia, in artistic interest, is that called Camera degli Sposi, where three of Mantegna's frescoes are well preserved, while others are injured past the recall of even the freest restorer. Besides the famous and admirable ceiling, the well-known collective portraits of the family and friends of Lodovico Gonzaga II. are still extant. Mantegna the realist is quite different from Mantegna the painter of classical or sacred subjects, and some of these gentlemen are of a quite rare ugliness, to which, nevertheless, Andrea, like Piero della Francesca, knew how to impart stateliness and even fascination. In his putti of the ceiling, and above the doorway, Mantegna again becomes the untrammelled decorator and noble draughtsman whom we have seen in Padua, at Hampton Court, and in many galleries.

The *cinquecento* memories focalize in the two sets of apartments of Isabella d'Este, those called della Grotta and del Paradiso. Those of the Grotta were upon the ground-floor; but little is left now, only a small court-yard, one room called La Scalcheria,

with frescoes by Giulio Romano, and a fine ceiling, the central medallion of which is attributed to Mantegna. Once, however, this suite of rooms was the apple of the great Marchioness' art-loving eye. In the Paradiso there were paintings by Andrea and Perugino and Costa; they are now in the Louvre, and show that Isabella's measuring ribbon meted out nearly equal sizes to all four. Had her part in the enterprise stopped at measurement, all would have been well; but she prescribed the subject and its disposition also, and so mixed up art and pedantry that the painters were by no means at their best, Perugino especially having shown but little aptness for the allotted task. Her trinity of Cupids must have even surpassed the pictures, if, as the records of her time say, they were by Praxiteles, Michelangelo, and Sansovino!

Isabella's Paradiso was so called by reason of the view from its windows and loggie. After Verona's girdling hills, it does not seem so much of a Paradise; but with the reeds and the water it is lovely enough, and we must not forget that the Marchioness was a calling acquaintance of the Estensi, rather than of the Veronese, and that after Ferrara's, Mantua's site would indeed seem beautiful. Verona was nearer geographically; but as the Venetian lion was no tame poodle, rather a very practical person, in spite of his wings, Isabella would

have seen him on his own dominions rarely and very formally, so that her comparisons would have been instinctively made with Ferrara. Indeed, Mantua is quite good enough, even for an æsthetic duchess; for its stretches of pale green of the upper and middle lakes are lovely, and the marsh damp gives the tonality to the whole castle, a delicate silvery bloom upon stone and brick alike.

The four rooms which are left of the Paradiso are beautiful even in their denuded condition; they are small, and their depressed vaultings are more delicately carved than any of the other ceilings of the palace. Their wood-mosaic walls and marble jambed doors are a worthy frame to memories of the illustrious visitors, of Castiglione and Bembo, Giovio, Aldus Manutius, and so many others, who helped to make the *cinquecento* glorious among Italian epochs.

The bewildered impression left by a first visit to the Reggia nevertheless includes the sense that here is perhaps the most notable setting in Italy to the life of a reigning family; succeeding visits deepen the impression; order begins to grow out of confusion, until one feels almost able to picture to one's self this busy palace-world of four centuries ago, when the five hundred rooms were populous, and the great building was fortress, dwelling, and museum all at once.

Let us try to see these great halls as they were on some fine spring morning early, say, in the sixteenth century. First of all, we fling back the shutters that the high rooms with wide doors, opening one into another, may swim in air and light which shall make the darkest corners transparent, and give the stuffs and metals a chance to flash back the sunshine. Then the rich tapestries must hang from frieze to dado, swept away in heavy folds from doorways by velvet pages with sleek, combed-out hair. Embossed leather may cover the lesser walls; the rooms are not filled with furniture as in modern fashion, but in each one stand a few pieces, heavy and rich, or delicate and elegant, all carven, not in a stereotyped manner, but with the free-hand work of an age which carries art and inventiveness into all that it does.

Upon scroll-work stands of beaten iron, huge copper braziers of coals, still useful to temper the keen spring air of the larger and shadier rooms, send up blue wreaths of smoke. It is a little world in itself, rooms within rooms, interests of every sort; in the ladies' apartments are lutes and psalteries and great frames for embroidery; in the library, a few scholars and ecclesiastics dispute or pull about the heavy volumes; in the ducal nursery and schoolroom, over which hangs always the beneficent memory of Vittorino, are the chil-

dren at their books or at their dolls; while near by, those dolls for grown people, the dwarfs, quarrel or play in a set of apartments like a large baby-house, where everything, as shown to-day to the stooping visitor, from the very low ceiling to the narrow, shallow-stepped Tom Thumb staircases, is graduated to the size of those tiny creatures.

Visitors, too, of all sorts there are waiting in antechambers, where parti-colored halberdiers stand guard at doorways: envoys from the Duke's friend, Aldus at Venice, come to show proof-sheets to the Gonzaga; dealers in artistic rarities waiting to offer their precious wares, carefully covered that no eyes may see them before those of the curiosity-loving Duchess; perhaps even a booted messenger from his very Reverend Highness, the Duchess' brother and Cardinal of Este, with a large-folded document containing some word about that coveted Cupid of Michelangelo. Or, if we change our dates a little and bring our characters into more absolute relation to the ceilings as they stand in their last and present carving, Giulio may be in waiting, ready to report how affairs go on in the decoration of the new hunting seat, or to thank the Duke for the gift of the horse Ruggiero. A busy and a famous man is Giulio, owner of a fine palace, his head full of projects, his *scarsella* full of memoranda for the draining of lands, the widen-

ing of streets, the improving of Mantua generally, and very courteously he is greeted, even by the greatest lords, as the prime favorite and almost prime minister of Gonzaga should be.

Noise and clatter issue from the five great court-yards: noise from the soldiers' quarters, where the troopers lounge in their gorgeous, dirty dresses; noise from the armory, where men-at-arms are rubbing away the marsh damp always ready to eat into the long rows of harness for horse and man which hang there; noise comes from the kitchens as well, where is the white army of cooks and scullions; noise, loudest of all, ascends from the stable court-yard, where scores of horses are being saddled and where, among the baying dogs, the hawks, brought out on trays, jingle the bells on their hoods. It was a strange jumble of incongruities this palace life; the arras and books within, the hawks and dogs without, the scent of the kennel coming in through the great windows to mingle with the burning perfumes of the Sala and the smoke of the incense from the chapel, where the organ drones away at early mass before the lords ride out to hunt.

In that which is left us to-day, of the art fostered by those who led the life that we have glanced at, our inheritance of Mantegna is the most valuable; but, after his name, those of Giulio Romano and Primaticcio are worthy of

commemoration, for they were admirably skilful as architectonic composers, decorators using purely architectural motives. Before their advent, the times had changed sadly from the noble period of art-growth of the *quattrocento*. The feuds of the thirteenth century, the despots of the fourteenth, had broken the strength of the burgs, and the *condottieri* of the fifteenth had weakened them still further; the crimes of the Borgias had come and gone in an invaded and demoralized Italy, while in the conquest of Florence and the sack of Rome, common ruin and Spanish oppression had fallen upon all things.

Most of the great old Tuscan masters were dead: Donatello, Ghiberti, the Robbia had lain in their graves for three-quarters of a century, and Raphael had just been borne to his tomb. In Florence, del Sarto still painted; Parma shone with a bright light, but in Rome, under the shadow of the mighty sculptor from whom they could not escape, men drew hard, dry, contorted figures, possessing the master's faults without his grandeur or inspiration. The art tide flowed in a great wave towards Venice, for in Tuscany the best had been done.

Politically, Italy had changed hands; the Spaniard was master, but the Dukes of Mantua and Ferrara were Charles V.'s lieutenants so to them was given life and length of days. What, then, were

Giulio and Primaticcio to bring to these favored cities which wore gilded chains? Men had altered with the new political conditions; they had become accustomed to having beauty about them, unaccustomed to fight as hard, work as hard, think as hard, for the getting of it. They had learned to prize it, however, jealously buying and hoarding the great creations of a past, which, though immediate, was irrevocable.

Meantime the younger masters substituted for creative beauty, splendor of combination. Almost within sight of each other's campaniles, are Mantua and Padua, having upon their church and palace walls nearly the two extremes of Tuscan art in Giotto di Bondone's and Giulio Romano's frescoes. Their figures are alike ill-drawn and ill-modelled, but how different are the reasons for this analogy. Giotto's are naïf and earnest; Giulio's are clever; Giotto, strenuous and sincere, left undone what he yet had no power to perform; Giulio had behind him all the knowledge of the Renaissance; he had been schooled by the greatest of all masters of composition, and had been used by him as a right hand, but Raphael had been laid away in the Pantheon, and the pupil Giulio now left his work undone because of a plethora which he was too hurried and too careless to digest, because of a kind of *blasé* indifference which desired splendor easily acquired,

and was willing to take the more salient and easily-seized portions of what had gone before. Giulio had plenty of invention, could combine and arrange with admirable taste, and could perform tricks of unpleasantly violent fore-shortening, not very carefully executed, to the great admiration of Vasari. Hard thinking, thoughtful search after noble modelling and purity of line, he had no time for, but close by him was the inexhaustible horn of plenty of the Renaissance into which he might dip with both hands.

Desiderio, Rossellino, Civitale, and many another had taught men to bind marble garlands about entablature and column, to make frieze and architrave blossom with scroll and vine; Michelozzo had hung his grand ceiling over the vast hall of the Florentine Palazzo Vecchio; Squarcione in Padua, and Mantegna here, in Giulio's city, had diligently studied the Greek through the Roman, and given to the world the multifarious decorative detail of antique life. There was much to choose from in the immediate past, and Giulio chose well. Artistic combination he did not fail in; elegance and fitness crowned his profusion and variety, and his ducal master could boast, in the ceilings and friezes of his suites of rooms, one of the greatest and one of the last decorative triumphs of the Renaissance.

With Giulio's frescoes, it is different; movement,

invention, and power he has, and the great tradition. It could hardly be otherwise with a man who had seen Michelangelo, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto at work. But he wears his art easily; he is in dressing gown and slippers, while vulgarity, coarseness, and carelessness ruin most of his effects. He had no time to study the expression of his Greek and Trojan warriors, and they contort their exaggerated features in grins of ferocity, while they throw about their limbs in violent gesticulation. As to his color, one sees in the shadows the smoke of the horrible sack of Rome, and its blood in his sanguine lights.

In the Palazzo del T., a hunting seat transformed into a palace by Federigo in 1525–35, Giulio and Primaticcio found their most notable Mantuan opportunity. The *stucchi* of Primaticcio are wholly charming. Elegance and distinction in color and design reign everywhere among them. One can hardly think of any better lesson that has ever been taught in *grotteschi.* The little panel-figures, friezes, and garlands are the precursors of Wedgwood and of Empire work in relief; the delicacy of their color-scheme delights, and deprives their profusion of any cloying sense, so that the modern artist who visits them feels instinctively the joy which the master had in them, and wishes himself to try his hand at this seductive medium of decoration.

Giulio, as to color and lightness of touch, is a lurdane after Primaticcio; he is coarse and heavy; yet he is a great decorative artist in his facility for the handling of varied material, and the production of really grandiose effects. The painter who was trained by Raphael comes to the surface often and again, yet much of Giulio's achievement in the Palazzo del T. partakes of the nature of the raree show, as in the case of his giants and of his salmon-colored menagerie keepers of the Psyche myth.

There is plenty of real charm, however, even if it be that of a child's storybook in the latter, and it is here that the reflection of the Farnesina pendentives, and more especially of its ceilings, is thrown upon the walls of the T. In the banquet of the gods, there is a whole *mise en scene;* nude figures, animals, still-life, fruit, flowers, an elaborate service of silver and gold plate, all under the open sky and against a sea whose shore line, stretching away like the indented coves and headlands of Sorrento, displays at intervals naked nymphs and gods who, while dangling their thick limbs in the water, watch a confused assemblage of satyrs, goats, elephants, and fawns; the idyls of Theocritus, the geography of Strabo, and the natural history of Pliny are mingled in a grand scenic *pot-pourri* of fresco.

In spite of the clumsiness, there is much that is

pleasing, something that is beautiful in this work; but it soon degenerates into the toy absurdities, the Jack-in-the-box horrors of the Fall of the Giants. The good Vasari admired them without stint, and Dickens, in his pictures from Italy, lent them his own vivid fancy, unknowing that it was Dickens, not Giulio, who was weird and powerful. These giants, if once taken out from among the tumbling squares of stone, might wag silly wire-set jaws as nutcrackers or as Santa Claus figures in a toy-shop window; that would be their scope of fulfilment in any modern performance of striking terror.

The portraits of the ducal horses in the Camera dei Cavalli are much more like them than the human figures are like men and women; for horses, having been less frequently painted, Giulio felt it here desirable to study his models and imitate them, instead of generalizing nature from the rendering of a century of painters.

Besides the Reggia and the Palazzo del T. there are other things to visit in Mantua: among them the very beautiful interior and curious façade of Alberti's Church of Sant' Andrea, which, as is usual with Italian churches, owes some of its most important features to men who lived and worked long after the original designer was dead. In the church is Mantegna's tomb with Sperandio's bust of him,

a grand, grim face with shaggy hair; it once had diamond eyes, they told us, and if it had they were appropriate to the man who saw nature always bordered by cleanly cut, definite, yet delicate outlines.

Mantua is best out of doors, for it is one of the unspoiled Italian cities, with wide, stately streets of later centuries and narrow tortuous ones of earlier times, the latter full of quaintness, while the waterfront of the town with its ancient bridges, and the towers of the Reggia, is picturesque everywhere.

Giulio Romano remodelled its cathedral, and did much throughout the city to make it "Mantova la Gloriosa." He lived here for many years, and built a fine house for himself, a palace indeed, not far from the T. It has window-boxes, neat lace curtains, and is well kept; the artist would not complain of its appearance, and if his ghost walks it walks complacent.

## III

"I SAY to all painters that none should ever imitate the manner of another; for if he does, he will become the grandchild, not the child of nature. For models so abound in nature that we should go to them rather than to other masters. I do not say this for those who follow art as a means to the acquirement of riches, but for those who wish to gain from it glory and honor." Thus wrote the most universal-minded of those who have handled chisel and brush, Leonardo da Vinci; he followed his precept more than did others perhaps, yet even he departed from it now and again. For in the long line of artists every one has looked at nature partly through his own eyes, partly through the works of others, contemporaries or predecessors. The greatest men had their precursors, and if we would ask for an answer to Leonardo, for a proof that intense admiration and devoted study of the works of others, do not stifle, do not necessarily even dull the edge of individuality, we find this proof established, this answer made clearly, perhaps oftener than anywhere else, in the works of Andrea Mantegna. To no man who has lived was the art of

the ancient Romans more worshipful, more worthy of passionate and sustained study, yet hardly any painter has been more individual. The veriest tyro in art can see in Andrea's work the influence of the ancient Romans. Yet he is precisely one of the few primitive masters who produce at least a momentary effect on that most limited and prejudiced person, the beginner in the study of modern art.

In these days of advanced art-criticism, when the new-school writer is a sleuth-hound at tracing "influences," he who notes that a man may look hard at the works of others, yet be individual and original, may scarcely pass for a teller of new things, yet it is of interest to find that some of the *most* individual of artists have been precisely those who passionately loved the work of forerunners. To be but an eclectic is pitiable, to be eclectic is excellent. Sometimes the extraneous influence is immediate, sometimes it is that of precursors a millennial dead; in the case of almost every artist it is existent, subtle, or strong. Rembrandt and Velasquez are unusual examples; but take the others, the greatest of them, the most rounded, the most individual. Who can imagine the young Titian without Giorgione, who was perhaps as *sui generis* as either the Dutchman or the Spaniard. Correggio, a Parmesan hermit, creat-

ing, if any Italian did ever create, found some of his tricks, his foreshortenings, for instance, ready to hand, played now and again by Mantegna and Melozzo da Forli. Donatello, though a much greater sculptor than Luca della Robbia, owed a far heavier debt to ancient art. Raphael submitted to "influences" wherever he might find them, stuffed them into his mental *scarsella*, and took them out again whenever needed, for adaptation. Michelangelo, with an individuality that stood forth almost a menace to the art of his time, studied Donatello, borrowed from Quercia, remembered Signorelli, learned by heart the abdominal muscles of the Farnese torso.

Even Leonardo the preceptor loved the regularity of the Greek, and forgot his talk about nature so far as to entertain himself by drawing scores of chic heads which some not unenlightened critics have so mistaken as to call profoundly studied, confounding their treatment with that of other heads by the same master which are studied indeed. As for Giotto himself, the arch-precursor, had he not studied Giovanni Pisano mightily. Giovanni, again, did he not reflect the French fourteenth century sculpture on one side of his art, and on the other side that of his father Niccola, who, far-sighted beyond the men of thirty generations, looked backward through the dark ages to the steady light of the

ancients that shone beyond. Thus it is all a house that Jack built, with Jack so remote in the historic past that Ictinus is a modern to him. Yet if it is a chain, if each man has inherited, each great man has increased his inheritance, until, though he be a link to bind, he is also a free man, lord of a personality, to have and hold, and lend out all at once. Such an one is Andrea Mantegna.

We remember well how a very young art-student for the first time trod the slippery waxed floors of the Louvre museum, and, passing down the long gallery, wandered into that of the early Italian masters. On the way he had found time to be terribly disappointed before certain pictures that bore upon the dull gilt of their frames a tablet inscribed "Raphael Sanzio." The student did not know that but a short month later his worship for the "divino maestro" would begin, when his own master should send him to copy certain engravings, translations only, by one Marco Antonio, but which *must* somehow be nearer, so he felt, to the conception of a world-famous Raphael, than could be that little wooden red-and-blue lady "*dite la Belle Jardinière*," or those black and smoky pictures Saint Michael, and the Holy Family called of Francis I. In the room of the primitive masters, the Botticelli's and Filippino's entertained the student; he thought them "queer," and before the very early masters' works, the mira-

cles in some *predella*, for instance, he stood in the fulness of a cheerfulness that took no thought of art.

Presently, on the east side of the room, he stopped short before a medium-sized panel (he thought it was a canvas) representing the Crucifixion. Romans these, "queer" again, decidedly queer, but also and just as decidedly something more than queer. How strange their legs were! long and thin as pipe-stems, hard as glass, sharp as metal, and the very earth, too, seemed made up of layers of iron. The student did not as yet quite know what style was (has anybody *ever* quite known), but he felt instinctively that these soldiers had an air of their own, and he lingered, desiring their better acquaintance. Close by was a picture called the *Madone de la Victoire*, with kneeling figures, one of them in full armor save for his head. The student liked armor, and had tried to draw knights. All this was only by a primitive Italian, naturally a very limited person, and yet he seemed to know better how armor looked and was worn, than did any modern painter whom the student remembered. Nevertheless this was dry, thin painting with not a "fat" touch in it, and this particular student had come to Paris at a time when loaded brushing was a *sine qua non* and when in the *ateliers d'élèves* nobody before Rembrandt or Velasquez was worth discussing; so the student, in spite of tempt-

ing peculiarities in the master was satisfied to pay him the *sotto voce* compliment of "draws rather well" and to pass on. But he remembered the panels, and on a second visit liked them still better. Twenty years after, when he read in the essay of a French critic, "who knows if we may not even call Andrea Mantegna the prince of draughtsmen of all time," that student, grown wiser, though he thought it a large proposition, did not combat it.

Mantegna, then, looked not only at Nature, but looked with passion and devotion upon the art of others, the art of the men who had been his forerunners by a millennial and a half. From his own personality and the work of the Greeks and Romans, he evolved grandeur of style, dignity, rhythm, measure; from his own personality and the observation of nature, he acquired a robust naturalism to be used when needed, and the capacity for an untiring rendering of every kind of detail, and from his own personality and his loving study of Donatello, he gave to many of his figures a kind of feverishly vital movement, especially facial movement. If we wish examples, we may find the result of his study of the ancients, rhythm, restraint, and measure, notably in his Triumph of Cæsar, and in some of the Eremitani frescoes; of his observation of nature, in his Gonzaga portraits of the Mantuan Reggia, and in ten

thousand details scattered throughout his work. If you would note the certain feverish vitality, common also to his great predecessor and contemporary, Donatello, look at Andrea's prints, engraved by himself, of the Taking down from the Cross, the Descent into Limbo, and compare the contorted faces, the mouths, which seem to be yelling rather than groaning their lamentations, the gesticulating limbs, the draperies which appear to share the excitement of those who wear them, with the faces, limbs, and draperies, which Donatello modelled for the Altar of Saint Anthony of Padua. Incidentally, remember also that Saint Anthony's is but ten minutes' walk removed from the Eremitani, where Mantegna afterwards painted a famous cycle, and that when Donatello began his reliefs in 1446, "*Andreas Patavinus*" was already arrived at the impressionable age of fifteen years, and was to paint two years later for Santa Sofia of Padua, a picture now lost, which, says Vasari, "might be taken for the work of an old, experienced master rather than of a youth." No need to ask if that "youth" watched the growing handiwork of Donato Fiorentino, whom the Paduans admired so much that the sturdy Tuscan feared lest his own high standard should be lowered, and longed for the sapient criticism of Via Larga and the Piazza della Signoria.

Only two instances of Mantegna's admiration for

Donatello have been chosen here, but they abound. As for his close observation of nature, it may be noted in almost everything that he did. He carefully studied the furrows and cracks in the earth, every pebble, and shell, and herb, the fruits and flowers in his garlands, and each tiny detail in the distant cities of his backgrounds, while the ornament which he lavished upon his architecture (see the right-hand panel of his Uffizi triptych) was executed with a care perhaps unequalled by any Renaissance painter.

To chronicle close recording, minute finish, is to awake a doubt whether such is not necessarily a hindrance to forceful expression. That it is so, cannot be denied. Mantegna succeeded in *spite* of his rendering of every detail, and this success is an interesting text to write upon. Andrea recorded, because he was able to record, because he loved the shapes of things, and his pencil was trained as well as inspired beyond that of others about him. Much has been written, especially by the followers of the schools of Ruskin and Rio, concerning the deliberate simplicity of early masters. Now, as far as modelling in detail is concerned, it is very doubtful whether any one of the early masters ever thought about the "lamp of sacrifice" at all. They left out detail, because they were unable to accomplish detail. Giotto and Masaccio had the sentiment of simplicity; yet,

it is almost certain that they would not have dared to be quite so simple, if they had possessed more of the science of modelling. They did not possess any more than they showed; they did not deliberately eschew this science, nor disdain it; neither did they struggle to acquire it, because, as yet, the time had not come for its acquisition, and they were still enormously preoccupied with other problems. To express and compose were Giotto's two great problems, and when for a hundred years the *Giotteschi* had confused their masters' methods without (save in one or two rare instances) developing them, Masaccio's problems became again pretty much the same as Giotto's. Anatomy and perspective put an end to simplicity for nearly an hundred years; a certain amount of it remained in frescoes for causes inherent to the material used, but into altar-pieces and tempera work the masters put every bit of anatomy, modelling, and perspective that they were able to accomplish.

Mantegna united these qualities more completely than did the others, and used them more easily. Best of all, he added to them so lofty a sentiment that he succeeded in resolving an almost impossible proposition: he *achieved grandeur without simplicity.* No wonder Albert Dürer counted among his greatest sorrows that while he was journeying to meet Andrea, Death outstripped the pious pilgrim, and

took the great Italian before his spiritual kinsman could reach him.

We have considered Mantegna's derivations, let us look at the material of which he made up his art work, — his types, his architecture, his ornaments — and then speak of the technique which he brought to bear upon his creation; his drawing, color, and composition.

We have already found him educated beyond most of his fellows; closely observant of nature; an adorer of ancient art; a master of movement, rhythmical and stately, or quick and almost feverish, and a man who loved to paint studiously, caressingly, such tiny detail as that of shells and fruits and flowers. Add to all this that his outline, even at its sharpest, was delicately sensitive, and what material for a decorator we have, and what a decorator he became! Taking Andrea's figures, we may roughly divide them into the pseudo-Roman, the realistic contemporaneous, and the ideal types of saints, angels, and holy personages. It is most of all in his Triumph of Cæsar, next in certain of the Eremitani frescoes, that Mantegna developed his Roman types; and perhaps, before saying more of them, it is well to note that in the frescoes, the very first impression is made by the architecture. In the cartoons of the Triumph, the accessories, though less important

than in the Eremitani pictures, are also very notable.

In the frescoes Andrea has fairly lavished his architecture, and has revelled in his stage-setting; in one of them an arch of triumph fills the whole background, in others are palaces, colonnades, arched passages, pillars, pilasters, and piers. This architectural framing dominates, and it may be said here that Andrea's elaboration of perspective, even more than his elaboration of detail, interfered with the unity of impression produced by each fresco as a whole. The science is too apparent; he wishes to know all, and does n't mind your knowing that he knows; the architecture is too emphatic, and the emphasis is increased by the fact that this master of linear perspective was, like most of the other primitives, sadly hampered when he came to a question of atmospheric perspective. He is, however, in like case with many another; for, save in the hands of a very few Venetians and Umbrians, the fifteenth century background would no more "down" than would Banquo's ghost. Andrea's buildings are, after all, only in the second plane, not the third or fourth; and, for all that atmospherically they do not "know their places," they are splendid and stately frames, more accountable perhaps than any other one thing for the effect of the frescoes. If his architecture is all antique, his costumes are, in three

of the rectangles of the Eremitani frescoes, frankly *quattrocento;* in the others, they are of that pseudo-Roman character which we may call Mantegnesque.

That he would have had them altogether Roman, we do not doubt; but the great artist cannot forget himself wholly, for even in his most earnest admiration Mantegna's personality asserts itself, as it should; he is more violent than the Greek, and he refines upon the later Roman. His people sometimes move with a nervous brusqueness that is unsculptural and therefore un-pagan; more often they stand statuesquely, or march rhythmically, as in the Triumph. Their long, thin bodies are evolved directly from Andrea's own personality. In the Triumph, they have much of antique grace; in the frescoes, it is combined with a great deal of mediæval meagreness. They are of that type which Mantegna preferred to all others, in which there is a mixture of ugliness with great elegance and even beauty, leaning now to the beauty side, with the striplings and children of the Mantuan cartoons, now to the side of ultra-elongation, as in the Crucifixion of the *predella* of San Zeno, — the type with a powerful, sharply-muscled thorax, slender but elegantly graceful arms and legs, and very small heads. In the latter, there is a hardness rarely absent from Mantegna's work, but they do very well as Romans, for the models who sat for him in Virgil's

Mantua or Antenor's (?) Padua were natives of a province that sent forth many such legionaries as look out still between jugulars of steel or under leathern cap on Trajan's column. The youths, senators, and soldiers, in the engravings of his Triumph are far freer than those of his frescoes, and attain the highest point of excellence reached by his classical figures. They are a whole world removed in their graceful-grim elegance from Filippino's people of the Florentine Strozzi Chapel, who seem quite vulgar in comparison; yet they are not Romans at all, but forms evolved by a great painter whose artistic temperament was a part of his own time, and who was helped, not hindered, by a wise indulgence of that temperament, and by choosing his material when and where it was most congenial to him and most fitted for assimilation. And thus he answers those critics who would limit his field; he shows, as have hundreds of others before and after him, that the true artist inherits from art as well as from nature; that he cannot copy the art which has gone before him, because he has a temperament which is a part of himself and consequently of his race and time; that his temperament will assert itself; that his time will environ and compel him; that what is put into the crucible of his brain will come out *his*, personal to him, personal to his epoch, ten times the better for that, yet

enhanced by every past good thing that he has looked upon and loved. If it were otherwise, if those were right who base personality upon isolation, we should shut the schools, turn our artist into a pasture with Giotto's bit of stone in his hand and his sheep before him. Then if he had the luck to have Giotto's genius, we should (if we were logical) thank God that he was not consummate, that is to say, a Raphael or Titian with two centuries of acquirement behind him.

When we examine Andrea's contemporaneous types, it is at once evident that he liked character heads better than portrait heads. He painted rather his beloved Romans or his bushy-haired apostles, than the likenesses of the people about him. The great collective portrait-fresco in the Camera degli Sposi of the Mantuan Reggia is the most complete example of his realism. He does not move easily under the burden of this unaccustomed task, neither do his subjects. They at first seem to the spectator to make up a sort of strange *tableau vivant*, to be stricken into immobility, to be staring, uncouth, wooden, and in certain cases gifted with rare ugliness. This feeling does not wholly depart, but soon we realize that these people are impressive in their gravity; that there are handsome heads, old and young, among them, and that they who are unhandsome, the large-featured duke, the

square-faced duchess with her strange head-gear, the sharp-featured children, the dwarf, looking a very old doll, are not easily forgotten. The men, all save the duke, wear the girdled doublet in wide pleats so popular at the time; the youths move very slowly, almost heavily about, and it is noticeable that, in the treatment of their legs, Andrea remembers that here he is a realist. There is no conventional elongation for elegance's sake as in the San Zeno crucifixion; these legs, though not clumsy, are, save in one case, normally thick, and the silk and woollen tight-hose have at once banished a great part of the muscular detail given to his Romans. These Gonzaga nobles are brothers in solemn imperturbability to the figures in Piero della Francesca's Legend of the Cross. The men in the Martyrdom of Saint Christopher are in mediæval costume, indeed some among them are called portraits; they suggest, in a measure, Signorelli's soldiers, but are sharper-featured, less ferocious, and far less swaggering.

In his purely sacred pictures Andrea's type of the Madonna is akin to Bellini's, in that she is always the close-hooded descendant of the Byzantine Maries; there is no opportunity for the picturesque arrangement of hair and veil dear to the Tuscans; the limitation is trying, and calls for greater feeling for facial beauty in women than Mantegna pos-

sessed. Like Bellini, again, he was uneven in his presentation of Madonna; in the superb altar-piece of San Zeno she is sweet looking, but not beautiful, sometimes she is fat-faced and heavy. The suavest of his Maries, in our remembrance, is in Dresden; the ugliest (if the picture be a genuine Mantegna) is in the Civic Museum of Verona. In the delightful army of Italian *putti*, Andrea's hold honorable office; real babies hardly existed in antique art, so Mantegna could obtain no inspiration from his Romans, and it is rather the *angioletti* of Giambellini who are the brothers to Andrea's children of the San Zeno Madonna. We suspect, too, that the latter try to look like the little bronze musicians of the famous Paduan altar, but they are not so forceful as Donato's *putti*, nor so winning as Bellini's. Their eyes have an appearance often noted in *quattrocento* work, of looking out through button-holes; their mouths are very round; their flesh is as hard as rubber; when they have grown a little older, and hold up an inscription in the "Camera degli Sposi," they have reached an age where their prototypes may be found in antique art, and therefore their flesh has hardened into marble. Yet they have great elegance; the Christ child in the San Zeno altar-piece is lovely; the one in the Dresden picture has journeyed far in the direction of Raphael; were his flesh to soften a

little more he might, save that he lacks the wide-eyed, inspired look, remind one not a little of the Urbinate's babies. Solidly built as he is though, he is not the infant Hercules which John Baptist and the *putto*, even at times the Christ child, became in Raphael's latter Roman work. We have chosen to mention the best of the Mantegna *putti;* many of them, very many indeed, are commonplace and clumsy.

In immediate relation to his flying children is a purely decorative and altogether delightful element in Mantegna's pictures, of which he was, if not the inventor, at least the typical adapter to pictorial purpose. He brought to a fuller color-life the Robbia garlands of green and white, and swung them across his frescoes. They are heavier and thicker than Luca's festoons, so heavy, indeed, that infant geniuses easily ride astride or climb them like trees. Flowers and fruits almost as solid-looking as the glazed earthen pears and apples of the Robbia are set in them with a perfect regularity which, like the formalizing of Italian gardens, makes them but the more decorative. Crivelli borrowed them from Mantegna in his own time, and everybody else has borrowed them since. We have to do here with Andrea's painting, not with his life; but one of his letters to the Duke of Mantua is so amusing in its suggestion of contemporaneous borrowing for

another purpose, that a reference to it is tempting. That this master, so dignified in all that pertained to his work, was intensely irritable and childishly ready at times to attribute importance to trifling matters, is proved more than once by documents, and on this particular occasion he wrote to no less a person than the Duke of Mantua. His tribulation was great; many of his quinces, his *pomicodogni*, had vanished from his garden, and their departure justified in his mind all evil thought of his next neighbors, well-to-do Mantuan gentlemen. The Duke interfered, so did the tribunal, and a verdict was finally rendered; first that certain quinces had disappeared from Andrea's garden; and secondly, that some one had apparently assisted them to disappear. No further satisfaction could be afforded by the testimony, and it is not unlikely that Mantegna long afterwards painted his garlands with regretful thoughts of loved and lost *pomicodogni*.

Having glanced, if ever so hastily, at types, architecture, and ornament, the material from which Mantegna evolved his art, let us even more briefly consider his technique, his drawing, color, and composition. M. Müntz has already been cited in reference to Andrea's design. The critic's question cannot be answered; for there are many ways of approaching the summit of Parnassus, and its up-

per slopes throne many who, as our mood changes, may sit in turn with Apollo. Raphael and Michael, Leonardo and Titian, Correggio, the Veronese, and Tintoretto, make up a charmed circle, and when the threshold of the sixteenth century is crossed, the gates swing together, closing upon an older and a different order of things, where the masters whom we call primitive must still linger, deprived of the wholly rounded perfection, that came to those of the High Renaissance.

But though they may be without it, nearest to this circle, in *our* hearts at least, sit the earnest Giambellini and the lofty-minded Andrea.

M. Müntz in his enthusiasm sounds the keynote, for Mantegna, in his challenge to posterity, stands firmly as one of his Romans, upon design and style, those bases of pictorial art. His draughtsmanship has already been considered at some length in reference to his figures. No matter how harsh the latter may be, his outline, in most of his wall-pictures, all of his engravings, and nearly all of his distemper panels, is delicate and sensitive, full of character, full also of grace in his Roman striplings of the Triumph and in figures like his acolyte of the Uffizi triptych. His modelling is close and dry, and his draperies and architectural ornaments are sometimes almost painfully elaborated.

With his design must be reckoned his treatment

of perspective, which he made an important, perhaps too important, part of that design. He came just after the time when Brunelleschi taught and Paolo Uccello studied that "delightful thing perspective." The knowledge of it bred a pride that verged upon pedantry in many a master, and Andrea made it so apparent that at times his science rather interferes with the complete enjoyment of the spectator. Nevertheless, he performed with it some very pretty feats, adding to the attractiveness of his work, especially in his placing of his foreground figures exactly upon the floor line of his composition in wall panels to be seen from below (as in the Triumph and the Eremitani), and then making the feet of his people of the second plane vanish behind his horizon, but he was still at the point where he cared more for the solution of the problem than for any enhancement afforded by it to his picture. One sees this especially in his famous Dead Christ of the Brera Gallery. The picture has been called beautiful in its foreshortening. It is admirable, inasmuch as skill and perfect sincerity are always admirable, but it is most unbeautiful. The custom, too, has been to call his circular ceiling of the Sposi Camera lovely, with its violently foreshortened putti and its faces of homely women looking over a balustrade; but it is rather fresh, curious, inventive, skilful, a not very handsome

novelty which has been the point of departure of men who, following upon its lines, have somewhat relaxed their tension, have chosen more agreeable silhouettes, and have found effects which really are pleasing.

The pioneers in the treatment of violent perspective handled stubborn material, but they were real pioneers, pathfinders to new forms of beauty. Had not the science of perspective been so new to art in Andrea's time, he would have handled it with less of the investigating, the experimental, and more of the artistic spirit, for he was an admirable composer of line and mass, and knew quite well when his silhouette was disagreeable.

Mantegna loved to compose, and liked to handle a great deal of material at a time; Madonna and the Child quite by themselves by no means tempted him as a subject, as they did his brother-in-law Bellini, for instance. Andrea liked a procession much better, or a whole scene elaborately set, with architecture and landscape. His draperies, though dignified in general disposition, were in detail what the French would call tormented, full of little crinkly folds that seemed to suggest the copper-plates of Nuremberg, and to emphasize the fact that Andrea was engraver as well as painter. For a *quattrocentisto* he composed well with light. He knew well the effect of light falling upon objects in the round; yet

it cannot be said that he enveloped his figures, for he seemed to see everything in nature circumscribed by a pure line. In his expression through design, he exhibited a dual artistic personality; pushed a little further in one direction, his Judith of the Uffizi might form part of a Greek vase painting; pushed a little further in the opposite direction, his Gonzaga nobles of the Mantuan Castello would become caricatures. Though an earnest student of the antique marbles, he was a keen observer of contemporary life as well. Moving in this wide gamut of elevated realism and noble idealism, he always preserved a loftiness of feeling which made him at times a peer of Michelangelo, while he possessed a *terribilità* of his own a quarter of a century before the great Tuscan began to work. His love of sculptural repose and dignity did not prevent him from being intensely dramatic in his *predella* of the San Zeno Madonna, and although his figures, like those of Giovanni Bellini in his Pietà, often grimace and distort their features, yet the contortion which became pathos with Giovanni deepened into tragedy with Andrea.

As might have been predicted, this lover of sculpture was lacking in feeling for color, a deficiency which few critics have noted, and which the late Paul Mantz has characterized admirably, remarking that Mantegna was a "brilliant but

rather venturesome colorist," and that, "tones which are fine, if considered by themselves, are heard above the general harmony of the music, and are rather autonomous than disciplined." For example, the colors in the Madonna of Saint Zeno are rich and beautiful in themselves, but Andrea has placed a brilliant corn-colored robe in the left-hand lower corner of one of the shutters of the triptych, which distracts the eye from the really important portions of the picture; while branches of vermilion coral and yellow fruits are dispersed here and there among his decorative accessories without any suggestion of choice as to their place, or of relation to the effect on the composition as a whole. In his earlier works, the frescoes of the Eremitani of Padua, Andrea is in his coloring like a child with a toy paint-box, spotting out impartially here a yellow mantle and there a green tunic without reference to any general scheme of color. He learned later from Bellini to use rich, strong tones in the Madonnas of San Zeno at Verona, and of Victory in the Louvre. Whether the unevenness, the lack of composition of color in those works, was wholly Andrea's fault, we cannot tell, for in considering the color of these, as of many old pictures, we are unable to speak with confidence, since time has so altered the relations that we can no longer in anywise verify the master's original arrangement, and

alterations would be peculiarly apt to occur in the heavy garlands of Andrea with their coral and fruits, where the strong reds may have remained brilliant, while the greens have fallen into warm, deep browns. Nevertheless, when all allowance is made, it must be confessed that this mighty master of style and of composition of lines was almost wholly lacking in the sense of color-composition. Indeed it could hardly be expected that the same temperament which could so keenly perceive, and so adequately render the grave music of noble and exquisite line could be equally susceptible to the deep-chorded harmonies of rich and subdued color.

Considering his whole product, his cartoons and his wall pictures, his tempera work and his engraving, we find that immediately after the five or six greatest names in the history of Italian art comes that of Andrea Mantegna; he stands at the head of the group of secondary painters which counted Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and Filippino, Bellini, Signorelli, and Perugino among its members. His name brings with it the memory of a lofty and intensely characterized style, of figures of legionaries, long and lean as North-American Indians, Roman in their costume, mediæval in their sharp, dry silhouette; of saints, hard and meagre, but statuesquely meagre; of figures stern almost to fierceness, yet

exquisitely refined in the delicacy of their outline; of realistic Mantuan nobles impressive in their ugliness; of stately Madonnas; of charming boy angels, flying or holding up festoons of flowers and fruits; of delicate youthful figures with long curling hair and crinkled drapery, where every tiny fold is finished as if in a miniature; of canvases filled with long files of captives, with chariots loaded with treasure, with sky lines broken by standards and trophies, with armored legionaries, curvetting horses, elephants with jewelled frontlets, and with statues towering above the crowd; of processions where the magnificent vulgarity of ancient Rome and the confused lavishness of an antique triumph are subdued to measured harmonies and sculptural lines.

Mantegna's is essentially a virile genius; he does not charm by suggestiveness, nor please by *morbidezza;* he lacks facile grace and feeling for facial beauty; he is often cold, sometimes even harsh and crude, and in his disdain for prettiness and his somewhat haughty distinction, he occasionally impresses us with a rather painful sense of superiority. Something of the antique statues that he loved and studied and collected entered into his own nature and his work. As Angelico was the Saint, and Leonardo the Magician, Mantegna was the Ancient Roman of Art. His were the Roman virtues,— so-

briety, dignity, self-restraint, discipline, and a certain masterliness, as indescribable as it is impressive,—and to those who appreciate austere beauty and the pure harmonies of exquisite lines, Mantegna's art will always appeal.

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